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THE PROBLEM OF FEDERAL FIELD OFFICE RECORDS¹

PLANNING A PERMANENT PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL RECORDS IN THE STATES

UPON its establishment in 1934 the National Archives was at once confronted with an overwhelming mass of records in the nation's capital—the accumulation of our government in its 145 years of eventful existence. These records nearly equaled in quantity all the records to be found in field offices of the federal government throughout the forty-eight states. Because they were the central records of our government, because they were often stored under very unsatisfactory conditions, and because the pressure for space in the District of Columbia has been unrelenting from the early days of the New Deal through the recent emergency and war periods, the National Archives necessarily has concentrated almost all its available resources upon the task of caring for this accumulation.

Although less has been done about federal records outside the District of Columbia, the National Archives has never been permitted to ignore their existence nor the problems involved in planning an adequate program for their care. There could be little peace of mind, for instance, so long as regional directors of the Survey of Federal Archives were sending in reports and memoranda calling attention to one situation after another in which the continued existence of valuable field records was endangered. Both the inventories of that survey and the countless lists submitted by field offices of papers that they wished authorization to destroy called attention to the fact that many field offices were jammed with useless papers which should be disposed of more systematically lest they jeopardize the safety of records that needed to be preserved. In many field offices it was found that space was as much at a premium as in the District

¹ The four papers that constitute this series of articles were read before the opening session of the sixth annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Richmond, Virginia, October 26, 1942.

of Columbia. Also, the growing threat of modern war, with all its destructive power, brought a sudden realization that records in certain large cities and in areas having military and industrial installations that were natural objectives of bombing expeditions were relatively unsafe. In recent months we have also been faced with the phenomenon of central agencies being moved out of Washington and taking with them their records and records problems to almost a dozen cities from New York to Salt Lake City, yet often, if they are older agencies leaving quantities of their earlier records behind them in the National Archives. Finally, we are now confronted with enormous quantities of field records of New Deal agencies that are being liquidated. And of course we realize all too well that one of our major problems after the war will be the handling of possibly even greater quantities of such records of the many war agencies that have been established.

The problem thus posed is one of vast proportions and of almost unbelievable complexity. The manner of its solution is not only of administrative concern to the federal government but also of deep interest to a growing number of scholars in all fields who in the future may wish to base their researches upon records that reflect the rapidly expanding spheres of federal activities. Although the final decisions must be made by officials of the National Archives, this is a subject upon which all scholarly organizations have a right to be heard, and it should be plain that the National Archives must know their views if adequate consideration is to be given to them. There can hardly be too much discussion of the issues and the interests involved. It seems especially fitting that the problems should be placed before the Society of American Archivists at this meeting. It is hoped, however, that discussion will not end here, but that those who are interested will give written expression to their views upon some of the phases of this many-sided subject.

The question of what to do with records of field offices of the federal government is not new. A number of older federal agencies were faced with the problem long before the National Archives came into existence. As the frontier moved westward, Indian agencies, land offices, and military posts outlived their usefulness and were closed. Some action had to be taken with respect to their records. In some cases, it is true, they were destroyed or abandoned; and some abandoned ones of great historical interest have been salvaged

by local historical societies and libraries, to which we owe a debt of gratitude. More often, however, and especially if the records still possessed administrative interest, they either were transferred to some local office or post that was still in existence or were sent to Washington. Eventually, large quantities of records of closed offices were concentrated in Washington, where they were placed with the older central records of the agency in some storeroom, from which they ultimately found their way to the National Archives. The total accumulation of field office records acquired in this manner by the National Archives is large. Not all of them have been identified and described, because, in general, after many moves they have become confused and disorganized—sometimes mixed with central office records and often mixed with each other. Frequently they are in poor physical condition, for less care was given to them than to the records of the central office. They are often discouragingly fragmentary, and one sometimes suspects that they are merely remnants that were overlooked when the others were destroyed. Yet, despite this disheartening picture, the remaining records from early field offices of the federal government are among the most valuable in the National Archives—representing as they do an age when, because of the lack of speedy transportation and communication, much more discretion was necessarily left to the local official.

Coming down to a more recent date, it is particularly appropriate that we consider the records of field offices of emergency agencies of the first World War. As these offices were closed their records were practically always sent to Washington in accordance with instructions carefully worked out in the central offices. These records were much used in the first few years after the war in the settlement of certain post-war problems, such as claims arising out of canceled contracts, claims for services, and the adjustment of disputed accounts. Because they created serious space problems, some of these field records, after they became less active, were destroyed. This policy sometimes involved the intelligent destruction of series of routine records. In other cases records were preserved on a sampling basis. For example, the records of all state fuel administrators were disposed of except those of Minnesota, Michigan, and Massachusetts. These were selected and saved as samples of state organization records that might be of value in case of a future war. In other instances all field office records of the war agencies have been preserved. The

records of state food administrators are now in the National Archives, as are those of the zone offices of the United States Grain Corporation. Similarly, the National Archives now has the records of all the district offices of the construction branch of the Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation and of most of the district records of the operations branch of the same agency.

This policy of bringing to Washington the records of closed field offices has been continued to recent date. Mention need be made only of the records of field offices of the National Recovery Administration, all of which were brought to Washington after the demise of that agency. After they had been in Washington a few years and the need of consulting them for administrative purposes had lessened, they were transferred to the National Archives. Records of abandoned field offices of other agencies are probably still being brought to Washington and will continue to be in years to come, at the instance of the agencies themselves; although more and more, instead of being kept for a time in the agencies' Washington offices, they are being offered directly to the National Archives.²

It is evident from this rapid historical survey that the federal agencies themselves have set a precedent that cannot be overlooked in a consideration of this problem. Nearly all the records they have brought to Washington have been records of closed field offices, however; so it may be argued that the precedent is not directly applicable to older records in offices that are still in existence. Never-

² A smaller quantity of field records has been brought to Washington through channels other than the parent agencies, although with their permission. The most important of these channels was the Library of Congress, which, before the establishment of the National Archives, often acted to preserve archival materials of historical value. In 1903, for example, to prevent the destruction of certain older custom house records, which had been authorized by Congress, the library obtained permission to have them transferred to its custody. These included customs records from Kennebunk, Portland, and Rockland, Maine, New Bedford, Mass., New York City, Perth Amboy, N.J., Philadelphia, Georgetown, D.C., Alexandria, Tappahannock, and Yorktown, Va., Edenton and Elizabeth City, N.C., Savannah, and New Orleans. These records have been transferred recently to the National Archives. The library in 1905 also obtained the transfer, from the office of the surveyor general at Tallahassee, of the East Florida archives, comprising some 62,000 documents. Two years earlier, the Spanish and Mexican archives at Santa Fé, which came into the possession of the government with the cession of New Mexico and adjacent areas of the southwest, were transferred by order of the Secretary of the Interior to the library, but in 1923, yielding to local pressure, the library returned them to Santa Fé. An attempt was made to obtain the transfer of similar Spanish and Mexican archives in California, but this was defeated by local interests, with the result that all but a small part of the records were destroyed in the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 (*Librarian of Congress, Reports, 1903, p. 26-28; 1904, p. 49; and 1923, p. 2*).

theless, one dilemma that must be faced if any program of field depositories is adopted is clearly apparent. Eventually, certain field records will be located in Washington while others will be in the states. This may be desirable. Possibly certain field records may best be brought to Washington, while others are more suited for depositing elsewhere. Possibly this division of field records is inevitable. At this stage of the argument we shall pause only long enough to note that the two alternatives to such division are (1) complete centralization or (2) the eventual return to appropriate field depositories of all field records now in Washington.

Two precedents for leaving federal records in the states deserve to be mentioned at this point—one of them furnished by the General Land Office and the other by the Office of Indian Affairs. There are, of course, other instances of local records being turned over to state libraries and historical societies, but such action was usually taken by local officials upon their own responsibility, whereas the cases to be described represent deliberate decisions made in Washington and sanctioned by Congress through enactment into law.

The General Land Office precedent goes back to 1840, when Congress passed a law urging the completion of the surveys in public land states and providing that "whenever the surveys and records of any such district or State shall be completed" the surveyor general "shall be required to deliver over to the Secretary of State of the respective States . . . or such other officer as may be authorized to receive them, all the field notes, maps, records, and other papers appertaining to land titles within the same."³ It was in compliance with this act that in 1869 the records of the surveyor general for the district of Mississippi were placed in the custody of the state of Mississippi. At the instance of the commissioner of the General Land Office, the act of 1840 was amended in 1853 to provide that any "agent of the United States" should have free access to records that either had been or might be turned over to the states under the 1840 law, and that such records should "in no case hereafter be turned over to the authorities of any State, until such State shall have provided by law for the reception and safe keeping of the same as public records."⁴ Under this act as amended, when the offices of the surveyors general were closed a great many states

³ 5 *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 384.

⁴ 10 *Ibid.*, 152.

received the records of the surveys of the public domain within their borders.

Nothing was said in this law concerning the records of the district land offices that had charge of the disposition of the public domain, but the precedent established with respect to survey records was followed in a law of 1876 that closed the last land offices in Ohio (at Chillicothe), Indiana (at Indianapolis), and Illinois (at Springfield) and provided that "the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized to transfer to the States respectively aforesaid such of the transcripts, documents, and records of the offices aforesaid as may not be required for use of the United States, and as the States respectively in which said offices are situated may desire to preserve."⁵ From time to time as the last land offices were closed in other states, there were passed other special acts with similar provisions, and in 1926 a general act was passed authorizing the Secretary of the Interior "whenever the last United States land office in any State has been or hereafter may be abolished" to transfer such records "as may not be required for use of the United States and which the State may desire to preserve" on condition that "such State has provided by law for the reception and safekeeping of the same as public records, and for the allowance of free access to the same by the authorities of the United States."⁶ In accordance with these acts a great many states received the records of land offices that had at one time existed within their borders. Some states, however, neglected to comply with the provisions of the law and therefore the records were sent to Washington. Such of these records as were not destroyed by the General Land Office are now in the custody of the National Archives.

An important consideration in the establishment of this policy by the General Land Office was the belief that there existed in Washington duplicate copies of all essential records maintained in the field offices with respect to surveys and the alienation of the public title to specific tracts of land. Duplicate copies of all plats of surveys, of all field notes of surveyors, and of all abstracts of entries were sent in contemporaneously by field officials, while the Land Office kept its own set of tract books, which were supposed to duplicate the information contained in those in local offices. The General Land Office also kept the original entry papers, upon which final

⁵ 19 *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 121.

⁶ 44 *Ibid.*, 672.

decisions with respect to the granting of patents were based. Thus it was felt that the interests of the federal government were sufficiently protected. On the other hand, the states definitely had need of these records as the foundation of all titles to lands within their boundaries, and frequent reference is still made to these records in most states where they were retained.⁷ Through experience the General Land Office has learned that the two sets of records were not always exact duplicates; indeed, many questions that have arisen have been based upon inconsistencies between them. The Land Office still finds it frequently necessary to write to state officials who have the custody of these records and in some cases to send a man to consult them. Thus, the General Land Office has been inconvenienced by the policy adopted, but it is doubtful whether it has been as greatly inconvenienced as it might have been had all these records been sent to Washington and all the questions of state officials been referred to the central office. Doubtless much could be learned from a more thorough study of federal-state co-operation as exemplified by this General Land Office experience.

The precedent furnished by action with respect to field records of the Office of Indian Affairs is of more recent date and is different from that presented by the General Land Office in that the greater part of the records involved are not duplicated in Washington. In 1934, just a few months before the establishment of the National Archives, there was passed, with the consent of the Office of Indian Affairs, an act sponsored by Congressman Hastings of Oklahoma, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior, "under rules and regulations to be prescribed by him," to place with the Oklahoma Historical Society "as custodian for the United States of America and the Secretary of the Interior" certain records of the Five Civilized Tribes and of other Indians in the state of Oklahoma.⁸ The law provided that whenever certified copies of these records are desired by the government to be used for its benefit "they shall be furnished without cost," and, further, "that any of the records placed with the Historical Society shall be promptly returned to the Government officials designated by the said Secretary upon his request therefor." Under this authority the Secretary of the Interior

⁷ It is the plat and tract books that are most frequently referred to locally. The inventories of the Survey of Federal Archives reveal that the correspondence of the local offices, a large part of which is not duplicated in Washington, is rarely or never consulted and, in many instances, is not kept under satisfactory conditions.

⁸ 48 U. S. Statutes at Large, 501.

has permitted the Oklahoma Historical Society to take possession of a large quantity of the older records of both abandoned and existing Indian agencies in Oklahoma. An act, introduced by Senator Norris and passed June 29, 1938, permits the Secretary of the Interior to place with the Nebraska State Historical Society, under similar conditions, "any records of Indian tribes which are within the confines of the State of Nebraska."⁹ In this latter instance, however, no action is known to have been taken under this permissive legislation. A special situation had existed in Oklahoma, of course, in that the greater part of that state's early history was bound up with the history of the Indian tribes within its borders, and the tribal governments of the Five Civilized Tribes represented the equivalent of a territorial government in that portion of Oklahoma formerly known as Indian Territory. The arrangement with respect to the Oklahoma Indian records also has caused the government some inconvenience in that several federal agencies in Washington have occasionally found it necessary to send their representatives to Oklahoma to consult the records, but again it is questionable which solution of the problem would over a course of years cause the least inconvenience.

Before passing from this historical survey to a consideration of specific proposals for the care of federal records in the states, it seems desirable to pause long enough to consider briefly the implications of two recent developments. The first of these is the removal of central offices of the federal government to locations outside the District of Columbia. Such records as have been removed with these agencies are, of course, not records of field offices. If these agencies with their records come back to Washington after the war, as some doubtless will, the problem will take care of itself, but there is certainly a reasonable doubt whether all of them will return. In other cases there may be a partial return of the agency. Some agencies, of course, have had parts of their central offices located outside Washington for many years. For example, the office of the supervisor of surveys, directing the activities of the Cadastral Engineering Service of the General Land Office, is in Denver, the office of the chief engineer of the Reclamation Service, in charge of the enormous construction program of that agency, is also in Denver, and the Health and Safety Service of the Bureau of Mines is in

⁹ 52 U. S. Statutes at Large, 1243.

Pittsburgh. There are also the rather special situations represented by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bonneville Power Administration, the headquarters offices of which have always been located outside Washington. Should records of all these agencies be brought into Washington, or are we going to begin dividing the records of headquarters offices as well as those of field offices? If they are to remain elsewhere than in Washington, records that may be of administrative use to such agencies should unquestionably be located near their central offices. This problem might be handled, however, merely by waiting to transfer the records to an archival institution until the administrative calls are so reduced in number that they could be handled satisfactorily from Washington. The answer to this question will, of course, influence the nature and location of depositories for federal records outside Washington, since relatively large bodies of records are involved.

A second recent development deserving special consideration is that of the establishment of temporary war agencies. To what extent should we allow the problems presented by their field records to influence the planning of a permanent program? Some of the major war agencies, such as the Lend-Lease Administration, the Board of Economic Warfare, and the National War Labor Board, operate chiefly in Washington and will have few if any field records. A few, such as the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, are merely co-ordinating agencies that operate through existing field channels, the records of which are part of our general problem. The Office of Civilian Defense operates largely through the state councils of defense, the records of which will doubtless remain in the states as they did after the last war. Plans for caring for them are already well advanced in many states. If the experience after the last war serves as a precedent, when this war is over there will undoubtedly be pressure to centralize in Washington the field records of such agencies as the Alien Property Custodian, the Office of Defense Transportation, the War Production Board, the War Shipping Administration, the Office of Censorship, and the Selective Service System. There may be less pressure for the centralization of the records of the local field offices of the Office of War Information and Office of Price Administration, but pressure for such centralization is likely to extend at least to the records of the zone offices. The reasons for such pressure are obvious. With all large war agencies,

questions of claims, refunds, post mortem enforcement cases, investigations, and personnel will exist, the settlement of which would seem to make centralization of field records desirable for administrative purposes. In this connection further study of the liquidation of temporary agencies of the last war would be valuable. There will doubtless exist also a desire on the part of the government to maintain close control over the records of many war activities, such as those represented by the Office of Censorship. If any of these records are to be allowed to remain in field depositories, it is plain that they will have to be depositories under the complete control of the federal government. Possibly such depositories under the control of the National Archives could, once the records are properly organized and inventoried, render the heavy administrative service that will be required. The question is whether agencies needing this service might not prefer to have the records centralized in a depository in Washington. There is also the pertinent question as to whether the National Archives would be in a position to act quickly enough to prevent the war agencies' acting for themselves. Obviously, it could not act quickly without the advance planning necessary to have the depositories ready, and such planning is difficult in war-time. How far is it wise to allow our planning for field depositories to be dominated by consideration of the fate of war records, which we may not be in a position to control anyway? Perhaps it would be better to eliminate them entirely from consideration, lest we be forced to act prematurely, and to allow a program for the field records of the federal government to develop slowly and surely in response to the peace-time needs of the nation.

Three basically different solutions to the problem of the field records of the federal government have been proposed: (1) That of a system of regional depositories; (2) that of maintaining depositories in each of the states, possibly under some system of federal-state co-operation; and (3) that of centralizing federal records in Washington. The combination of any two of these, or of all three, has also been envisioned.

The establishment of regional depositories for federal records seems to many a very simple and natural development. In 1935, when the Survey of Federal Archives was begun, there were more than seventy federal agencies with established regional schemes of administration. Some agencies had more than one such scheme.

The Geological Survey, for instance, had separate regional organization schemes for its Conservation Branch, Topographic Branch, and Water Resources Branch. In all, these seventy agencies operated through 108 different regional organizations.¹⁰

Presumably, the records of these regional offices are of importance second only to those in Washington. They are also large in volume. The records of lesser offices, if there exists a third or fourth level in the hierarchy, might well be concentrated in regional depositories where they would be accessible to regional supervisors. This would be the easier arrangement to administer because records of these smaller offices would be of less importance and a greater proportion of them would be disposed of as routine material of little value. Concentration of records at the zone level would be wise also because offices on a lower level would be established and discontinued, or changed in their location, more rapidly. Such regional depositories would correspond more or less to the natural regionalism that exists in the country, would reflect regional interests and problems, and would serve eventually as centers for writing regional history. They would be located in the larger cities, where there is a concentration of federal offices, so that federal officials could be assisted with their records administration problems, including the disposition of records of slight value; so that transfers of records worth retaining would be relatively simple and inexpensive; and so that service in response to requests of an administrative nature could be easily rendered. In contrast to any plan that provided for scattering federal records among the forty-eight states, the regional plan would provide for depositories of some size and dignity, with sufficient records to justify the maintenance of a fair-sized staff, including technical experts, and appropriate technical and library facilities. Other federal agencies would understand and appreciate the nature of such regional depositories and be quick to take advantage of them. Budgeting for and administration of such a system of regional depositories would be relatively simple.

In the earlier thinking about a regional scheme, separate archival

¹⁰ National Resources Committee, *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development* (Washington, 1935), p. 71. Maps showing these regional organization schemes, agency by agency, appear on pages 206 to 223. This publication is of primary importance in connection with any consideration of regional depositories. Also thought provoking are the papers contained in U. S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School, *Washington-Field Relationships in the Federal Service* (Washington, 1942).

buildings were doubtless contemplated. It was later suggested, however, that advantage might be taken of the present program for erecting federal office buildings in the larger cities—a program, presumably, merely interrupted by the war—by designing them so that space is reserved for an archival depository. Several floors might be designated for this purpose, or, possibly, more efficient use could be made of the inner part of the building, less suitable for offices, by fitting it up for the housing of records. This would place the regional archives establishment in the same building with most of the offices it was intended to serve, and there would be maximum efficiency in the use of these facilities. In fact, one of the questionable features of the scheme is that it would be difficult to prevent the archival depository from becoming a central filing office for the agencies housed in the building. Perhaps such a development, to the extent that it took place naturally, would be all to the good. The distinction between current files and archives is a theoretical tight rope that in practice it is often impossible to walk.

A further elaboration of this plan connects the regional archival depository of this character with the movement for greater and more effective interdepartmental co-operation at the regional level, a subject that was being studied by the National Resources Planning Board and the Bureau of the Budget before the war began. There is need for greater co-ordination and integration of federal programs in the region, but to obtain this it is necessary to draw the agencies together at this level into one city and into one building, if possible, in order that they may gain greater familiarity with each other's work. At these federal subcapitals, centralized services in such matters as personnel management, supplies and equipment, processing and printing, and management of office and storage space could be provided for the many separate agencies whose offices had been brought together physically. One of these services might well be a regional administrative reference service for officials, in which a regional library and a regional archives establishment would find a place.

If all of this seems somewhat theoretical, the answer is that our planning is for the future and that plans should be pointed in the directions in which the federal government will move in coming decades. Our planning becomes still more important when we realize that our decisions may have an influence, however slight, in the determining of those directions.

Perhaps the most serious drawback to the regional plan is that at present, at least, regional areas are not standardized. Some are purely arbitrary areas for the decentralization of administration and their boundary lines conform to state boundaries. Other regional boundaries are based upon natural features, such as drainage areas or the character and extent of certain natural resources. Still others rest upon economic considerations, such as the transportation pattern or the extent of metropolitan influence. In some cases state boundaries are entirely disregarded; in others where they are generally followed states may be divided between two regions. Certain states have a peculiar borderline location so that in the case of one agency's regional pattern they may be associated with certain states in one direction, while in other patterns they are associated with other states in the opposite direction. Montana, Oklahoma, and Ohio may be mentioned as examples. There is little chance of a regional depository being located within their borders. Records relating to different federal activities within their boundaries would likely be sent out of the states in different directions, with the result that the states would be impoverished and would find it difficult to know in which direction to turn for the information they wished. The state of Washington might resent having to send its federal records to California. New Orleans might resist transferring its records to Atlanta or St. Louis, as the case may be, and might prefer their being sent to the nation's capital if they had to go out of the state. The more one considers the situation, the more impossible it seems to set up a system of regional depositories without stirring up considerable local feeling. A system of regional depositories in almost all the larger cities, taking advantage of a federal office building program so far as possible, might be a solution. The advantages of a true regional program would be largely dissipated by this arrangement, however, without the obtaining of advantages that would accrue were the states themselves made the units.

States represent ready-made administrative areas. Why not, then, consider the possibility of basing a system of field depositories upon the definite, stable framework that they seem to provide? In this connection, let us first revert to the previously mentioned precedents set by the General Land Office and the Office of Indian Affairs and ask ourselves whether it is desirable to continue the policy there begun of depositing field records in existing state libraries and histori-

cal societies, under such safeguards as are represented by those examples. Mention has already been made of the special character of the records so deposited. Perhaps there are other records of similar character, which such institutions might be glad to have and which might appropriately be placed in their hands for safekeeping. It seems very doubtful, however, whether a continuance of this policy would solve the field records problem, and for the following reasons:

1. Many federal agencies might be reluctant to place their field records in non-federal depositories. The pressure that will probably exist after the war for bringing the records of most field offices of emergency war agencies to Washington has already been mentioned. The same pressure exists to a high degree for all federal records. So long as records have any considerable administrative value, even if the need to refer to them be only occasional, federal agencies like to have them at hand for quick reference when they are needed. Considerable persuasion would be necessary to get federal agencies to leave their records in field depositories, even if such depositories were under federal control. It must be remembered that at least for the present the final decision as to what to do with their field records rests with the agencies and not with the National Archives. If they were expected to deposit their records with existing state institutions, it is quite possible that such deposits would be limited to records that are duplicated in Washington or to routine records of borderline value. All really important records might continue to be brought to Washington, and the problem would not be solved.

2. Speaking quite frankly, all of us know that in many states, particularly in the Far West where great quantities of federal records are to be found, the state libraries and historical societies are very weak institutions, inadequately housed, inadequately staffed, and inadequately supported. In some states they receive no state support and are hardly to be considered state institutions. The simple fact is that they are wholly unprepared to assume the burden that would be thrown upon them. Even responsible institutions rarely have the facilities that would be required to care for records in such quantities as would be necessary if they were to contribute materially to the solution of the field office problem.

3. State institutions have their own areas of responsibility; and those areas are usually large enough to tax all their resources. They are responsible for the archives of their state government and possibly

for the records of certain local governments as well. If they are historical societies, they must add to their responsibilities for public records the collection of papers of important individuals and the records of private institutions, organizations, and business firms. Their first loyalty is to the state that supports them. It is likely that federal records, because of their bulk, would come to be looked upon as white elephants, and that they would be crowded out of satisfactory storage space in favor of state records and prize private collections.

4. So far as the federal government, through the National Archives or otherwise, attempted to exercise some measure of effective supervision, as provided by the conditions of deposit, over storage conditions, over rehabilitation techniques, and over the arrangement and description of the records, a dual system of control would be established which might represent a potential source of friction.

The time expended in explaining why the system of deposit with existing state institutions would be inadequate and unsatisfactory is not wasted if it helps us to visualize the only kind of system that is likely to work—a system of federal depositories in the states, supported with federal funds and under federal control. After all, it seems only proper and equitable that the federal government should bear the cost of preserving its own records and not place that burden upon the states, which are not adequately supporting their own agencies in the work that they ought to be doing. The one possible development in this connection that has fired the imagination of some of us is that of federal-state co-operation in the building and operating of joint depositories, the housing under one roof of what are really two archival establishments. This idea may not appeal greatly to those states that already have splendid new buildings, but they are still comparatively few.

By the joint use of federal and state funds, buildings might be constructed on a scale that could scarcely be afforded by either government alone. They could be provided with the most modern facilities and equipment for the repair and photoduplication of records. Library resources might be pooled into a single adequate library. Search room facilities might be combined. Scholars, administrators, and lawyers could use both federal and state records in the same institutions. Joint resources could be drawn upon for exhibitions and other publicity purposes. The records, however, could be kept

apart and under the control respectively of state and federal employees.

Is such close co-operation really possible? Carefully considered arrangements and agreements would be necessary, of course, but it is doubtful whether they would be more involved than arrangements that have been successfully administered in other co-operative federal-state programs. There would be other advantages. The records of co-operative federal-state programs such as exist with respect to roads, vocational education, social security, and employment, and of others likely to be established in the future would be kept sufficiently close together so that they could be consulted together to obtain a complete picture of the operation of these services in a single state. There could be mutual co-operation in working out programs of complementary nature for the preservation of income tax returns and other records which represent duplication of information between federal and state holdings. The possibilities of such co-operation are largely unexplored. They can be expected to increase in the future. A co-operative program of this type might well win greater political support from Congress and from state legislatures. Congressmen are always anxious to get something for their states. In this respect, a state program would doubtless have far greater appeal than the regional program, which is more likely to excite political jealousy over the location of depositories and to result in political discontent when such locations are disappointing, as they must often be. Locally, such a program is likely to appeal to state pride, and state legislatures may well grant far more financial support to such institutions than to the present weak agencies whose achievements are often not of a character to impress legislators. To the extent that the institution satisfied a local need, the legislature would be under pressure to grant this increased support.

Finally, the possibilities of this program's contributing to the raising of standards of archival work and to the stimulating of serious and productive research throughout the country are particularly exciting. They need not be dwelt upon, for they will be obvious to most of the members of this society. Parenthetically, it may be said that even in states that now have satisfactory buildings, the establishment of a federal depository in the same city would achieve many of the advantages that may be claimed for this program.

Now we come to the disadvantages. In the first place, it may be

assumed that depositories such as we have been speaking of would be located in the state capitals. In a large number of states, however, the state capitals are not the largest cities and therefore not the cities in which the concentration of federal offices is usually found. Philadelphia and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania, Chicago and Springfield in Illinois, and St. Louis and Jefferson City in Missouri, are examples illustrating the rather common situation that exists. Another complication is that state universities and other educational institutions likely to make use of the records for research purposes are often to be found in the larger cities rather than in the state capitals. Again, federal agencies in the larger cities would be reluctant to allow their records to be removed to depositories in the capitals. Under the circumstances they might prefer to send them to Washington. The real question is whether in such cases the institution would be able to function as a genuine archival agency, actually serving federal officials and agencies, or would fail in one of its major purposes.

A second serious drawback is that state boundaries, after all, are not wholly acceptable dividing lines. The jurisdictions of most federal field offices cross state lines, so that records relating to operations in one state are likely to be taken out of that state. When we consider the records of zone offices, which encompass a number of states, we have the reverse of the situation that was cited as a disadvantage of regional depositories. States may be convenient ready-made areas in one respect, but in another they are very artificial. Seriously, why should we worry about a depository in New Jersey if we are to have one in New York City or in Philadelphia? If the records so far as they relate to specific activities in particular states are going to get mixed up under either system, what has been gained?

A final argument that may be used against both the regional and the state schemes may be presented at this point, and it is a fundamental one. It is that neither the central records nor the field records can stand alone. They must be used together if a complete picture is to be obtained. A knowledge of the policies, procedures, and programs of a central office is not enough. It must be supplemented by a knowledge both of the local conditions out of which such policies, procedures, and programs grew and of the effectiveness of the enforcement and execution of the same. The program found outlined in the records of a central office is one thing; the degree to which it is carried down through the hierarchy of field officials and made effec-

tive is another thing and the more important of the two. History has been written too much from the central records alone. It is equally dangerous to write history from the field records alone. Yet, is it not this kind of one-sided history writing that a system of field depositories would encourage? The conscientious historian would be forced to shuttle back and forth between Washington and the field. He could not get his records together and would have to take copious notes in order to compare and correlate. He would lose time and his product would suffer. Besides, others than residents of Tennessee might be interested in Tennessee history. We should only make it necessary for the student at Harvard, Northwestern, or Rice Institute to travel to two widely separated places (or to more, if we place records relating to Tennessee in various depositories) instead of to one.

The field office records are of interest to both the administrator and the historian because they contain the details of the execution of a program. Using the Office of Indian Affairs as an illustration, it is suggested that studies of some of the basic problems in Indian administration must be made mainly from the local records. A few such problems are the operation of the allotment policy, the administration of tribal holdings, irrigation projects and their contribution to the Indian economy, sources of Indian income, operations of Indian police and Indian courts, the question of ordinary day schools versus boarding schools, employee living conditions and relationships on Indian reservations, the effectiveness of certain health programs, and Indian-white relationships on the edges of reservations. It is only the field records that permit an objective study of actual accomplishment. The reports of field officials that are received and filed in the central office cannot tell the full story, and they are naturally colored by personal interests and, perhaps, prejudices. As another illustration, let us ask whether the field records of the Soil Conservation Service offices in Kansas and Texas, the famous "dust-bowl" region, now that those offices are being closed, would be of greater use locally than in Washington. The records of these offices embody the experiences of the federal government in its first serious experimental work in remedying a condition that may occur again. Federal officials in Washington presumably would be responsible for formulating the programs to deal with such conditions in the future. Would not the experience of the past more likely be drawn

upon in formulating such programs if the records were in Washington?

It is suggested by some that a distinction might be made between field records of national importance and field records of local importance. The fact is that no records are purely of national importance and no records are purely of local importance. It is only a matter of degree, and not only would it be difficult to decide the disposition of records on such a basis but the decision would be subjective in character.

It is apparent by this time that in presenting the arguments against field depositories, we are presenting the arguments for centralization. Centralization would also probably be more economical and more efficient. Few have stopped to consider that the cost of the maintenance of a system of separate field depositories, no matter which of the proposed plans might be adopted, would be greater than the amount needed at present for the maintenance of the National Archives in Washington. To this cost would have to be added the amount necessary for an increased administrative staff at the National Archives to provide the necessary supervision over such a field organization. Budgeting, purchasing, and accounting would become exceedingly complex. A large amount of correspondence would be necessary, in connection not only with administration but with the correlation and integration of work on guides, inventories, and other finding mediums, and with the handling of reference inquiries. Close administrative supervision would be necessary if the regional depositories were not to become almost autonomous archival establishments. Funds for travel on the part of staff officers and others might have to be increased instead of decreased. Additional red tape and delay is the inevitable accompaniment of the establishment of field services. Would it not be a great deal simpler if all records worth preserving were brought together in one place, where they would be easier to organize, inventory, and administer according to accepted and uniform standards, and where they could be consulted through application to but one central office of reference service?

Two of the arguments most frequently heard against centralization are, first, the lack of space in the National Archives building, and second, that it is unwise in case of wars and disasters to have all the nation's valuable records concentrated in one place. The first argument will hardly stand up under closer examination. It is true that,

barring miracles of achievement in microphotography, there are now enough records worthy of retention in the District of Columbia alone to more than fill the National Archives building. Another building will soon be necessary whatever may be the decision about the field records. The real issue is simply whether the greater merit lies in the program for field depositories or in that for centralization. If it lies in centralization, the necessary space could be provided in Washington more economically through the erection of one building than through the erection of a number of depositories in the field.

The second argument, as to the dangers from war and disaster, is more serious. Such dangers may be exaggerated by some and possibly underrated by others, but no one denies that they exist. If centralization is otherwise sound, the only possible answer to this argument lies in the insurance that might be provided by the multiplication of copies, relying for this purpose chiefly upon the camera.

What consideration should be given to the relationship of microphotography to this whole problem? Professor Robert C. Binkley, we recall, spoke of microphotography as one of the modern processes and devices that in their entirety promise to have an impact on the intellectual world comparable to that of printing. Such inexpensive copies of the originals, easy to transport, store, or reproduce, would, be held, tend to decentralize scholarship. The resources of the great centers would become available to state and city libraries, to educational institutions, and to the individual scholar wherever located.¹¹ If this vision is realized, the service rendered by the National Archives might be, in large part, that of a great mail order house for copies of public records. Centralization of the original records would be no deterrent, perhaps would even facilitate, the decentralization of the copies.

How far short of Binkley's vision microphotography will fall in the next generation we cannot now know. But it is obvious that the early period of emphasis on techniques and experimental production is passing. One has only to be aware of the vast quantities of records now being filmed in government agencies and elsewhere, partly as a result of war demands for space and insurance copies, to realize that microfilming has reached the mass-production stage. The National Archives, as part of its file microcopy program, has filmed hundreds of volumes of early records of great historical value—

¹¹ Robert C. Binkley, "New Tools for Men of Letters," *Yale Review*, N.S., 24 (March, 1935), 519-537.

records of central offices and field offices alike—and stands ready to furnish positive prints of these films from its master negatives for a modest price. Perhaps this is the answer to the natural desire of states and regions to acquire those federal records that relate to their fields of interest. They need not burden themselves with bulky original records. Selecting carefully, they can order on microfilm what is most valuable to them and can build up a true “collection” of the choicest material. Are we justified in planning an elaborate program of regional depositories, based upon an older experience of the scarcity of originals, in the face of the mounting growth and improvement in techniques that multiply copies, distribute them cheaply, and cut to an inconsequential figure the space needed for storage?

Even the most ardent advocate of centralization, however, quails before the thought of bringing to Washington the long-accumulated and bulky case files of federal courts in the eighty-three judicial districts throughout the country. Court records are hardly to be considered field records in the strict sense, because the courts themselves possess a large degree of autonomy. Some of the arguments for concentration, consequently, do not apply to them. They are more complete in themselves and more able to stand alone. The advocate of centralization wavers also before the thought of centralizing all the bulky records of New Deal agencies that record their transactions directly with individuals—the loan folders, for example, of such organizations as the Farm Credit Administration, the Farm Security Administration, the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Rural Electrification Administration, the Federal Housing Administration, and the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, or the agreements and contracts with individuals made by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, and the Social Security Board. Few would maintain that records of a city post office should be brought to Washington, yet there are conceivably certain records of the New York post office that would have considerable value for local history. One questions the wisdom of bringing to Washington the records of such regional authorities as the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Bonneville Power Administration, unless, of course, they should conceivably go out of existence some day. The greater likelihood is that they will grow rapidly, and that there may be established other regional authorities patterned upon them.

Doubts such as these lead one to consider a program, built to fit

specific situations, with regional depositories in New York City or the Tennessee Valley, if called for, with co-operative buildings in certain states, if they are needed and if satisfactory agreements can be reached, and with the centralization in Washington of certain classes of field records that have high administrative value or that, for other reasons, the agencies do not wish to have scattered. This, of course, would make for an exceedingly complex administrative set-up. Such a program might not be understood as well by Congress, and it might not be so popular with the people. There would be many difficult decisions to make in connection with the allocation of records. It is the kind of compromise solution that meets many objections but makes nobody happy. It is, nevertheless, worth thinking about.

One final course of action deserves to be presented. Could we not free ourselves from the pressure for immediate decisions by establishing at a number of appropriate points in the country not permanent depositories but temporary concentration stations, which would also be processing plants? They should be located in large warehouse-type buildings, as well protected and fire-resistant as possible, and yet far less expensive than the traditional archives building. Buildings of this character should become available soon after the war. Records of war agencies could be moved into these buildings as the agencies closed their work and vacated their quarters. Other field offices, too, could send at once to these centers records that were causing critical space situations or that could not otherwise be properly cared for. This would represent a natural expansion of our present field program of having field representatives in several of the larger cities. The field representatives could continue to survey and dispose of as large a quantity of routine records as possible before the remainder was removed to a regional concentration center. But it is impossible for them to do a final job on large, complicated accumulations in the short period in which it is often necessary to act. Other records, possibly not of permanent value, would often need to be kept for a number of years after the war for administrative use in connection with the liquidation of the agency, and these records could be maintained temporarily in the concentration centers.

At these concentration centers a staff would be engaged in further study of the records, eliminating smaller series of useless papers, possibly weeding some files and sampling others, and setting aside those other records that need to be kept only temporarily. Here, too, the final body of records deserving permanent preservation might

well be given its preliminary, if not its final, arrangement. Microfilm equipment should be available at all such centers so that at this point suitable records could be placed on film. Records thus reduced in bulk and properly organized would be ready to be sent to Washington or to be placed in a field depository. By that time enough should be known about them to decide which action is the more appropriate. If space were not available in Washington, or if the field depository were not yet available, such records could be set aside in one portion of the building and held for years if necessary. Possibly preliminary checklists and inventories could be provided for the records in this stage, and a staff would have to be maintained to meet the demands for service on the records as long as they are administratively active.

As the records worthy of permanent preservation increased in quantity they would give indication of the nature and size of the permanent depository required for the particular area. This depository would not need to be in the same place as the temporary center. The character of the records accumulated there would help to determine the most logical location. A large independent archival establishment may be forecast, or a number of smaller ones, possibly in co-operation with the states. If and when permanent depositories are built, five or ten years after the war, advantage could be taken of the radical changes and advances in building construction and equipment that are almost certain to be characteristic of that period. Co-operative relationships, if they are indicated, could be slowly and carefully worked out on the basis of rather definite knowledge of the problems to be met. There would be time to learn whether agencies recently moved from Washington were to be returned there. There would be time to see whether or not the post-war activities and functions of the federal government were to be expanded or contracted, and plans could be made on a scale to fit the indicated trend. More time would be gained to test and determine the final rôle of microfilm. We should be able, if regional depositories are indicated, to tie in with the regional planning of federal service agencies as such planning develops after the war.

When permanent depositories are built, the temporary centers could be abandoned with little or no loss to the government. If owned, they could be turned over to other agencies; if rented, they could be returned to their private owners. Such a course of action would permit us to plan a program for the field records to fit the

indicated needs. We would grow into it. There would be less risk of mistakes, of building depositories where they are not needed, of building them too large or too small, and of placing in them the wrong type of equipment. Under conditions as unstable as the present, this might be the course of wisdom.

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THE INTERESTS OF THE STATES IN FEDERAL FIELD OFFICE RECORDS

IN HIS paper, "Planning a Permanent Program for Federal Records in the States," Mr. Holmes suggested three different solutions to the problem of handling the field records of the federal government. He first discussed the feasibility of a system of regional depositories, then a system of federal-state co-operation for maintaining depositories for federal and state records in each of the forty-eight states, and finally the centralization of all federal records in Washington.

I am not disposed to favor the suggested system of regional depositories. A survey in 1935 showed that more than seventy federal agencies had established regional schemes of administration. Not only were the regions or areas of the various agencies different in geographical scope, but the regional organization schemes of the various offices within a single agency covered different territories.

Three advantages of the regional depository system suggested in the first paper were that such depositories would be located in larger cities; that such depositories would be of some size and dignity; and that they might be located in federal office buildings rather than separate archival buildings.

I am somewhat doubtful of the further concentration of business, government or otherwise, in overcrowded cities. For instance, the recent removal of the National Park Service from Washington to Chicago merely helped to solve a Washington space problem. A better solution might have been its permanent removal, along with the Department of the Interior, to some small town in Kentucky or Oklahoma.

The argument that regional depositories would be of size and dignity is not necessarily valid. The recent and present rate of record production by the federal government seems sufficient to fill the National Archives building, any and all annexes it might acquire, and forty-eight or more state depositories of immense size and considerable dignity. The military and naval forces of the United States for the year 1942 alone requisitioned 289,712 typewriters. The entire government, I believe, finally called for 600,000. These produce more and more records and innumerable useless and file-filling carbon copies, most of which will cause no eye strain from the time they leave the hands of the typist until the dim and distant day when they fall into the hands of the archivist.

The location of the regional depository in a federal office building probably would mean that the archivist would become more or less of a filing clerk. That might be a legitimate function of the archivist, and the Civil Service examinations for the position of junior archivist would lead one to believe that he need have little more ability or training than a file clerk.

The centralization of federal records in Washington naturally has its advantages, but did the President of the United States think these advantages sufficient for him to deposit his papers in Washington? The argument that centralization would save money and promote efficiency ill befits an official of the government in the era of the New Deal. The cost of the difference in centralization and non-centralization would be far less than the proverbial widow's mite when compared to the enormous and appalling waste of tax money since 1933. The fear that regional or state depositories might become almost autonomous archival establishments should bother no one. Anyway, I am constitutionally, fundamentally, and otherwise opposed to the general proposition of centralization.

A system of federal-state depositories in each of the forty-eight states probably would be impractical, but I like the idea. This system might be extended down to state-county co-operation, with one of the main functions of the archivists in the county being that of a file clerk. The fact that federal and state governments have co-operated successfully in matters pertaining to public health, agricultural extension work, social security, social welfare, and many other fields would seem to insure success in co-operative records preservation and administration.

A general policy of placing federal records in the custody of state libraries, state archives, or state historical societies is not practical, for the simple reason that practically no state could supply adequate buildings or financial support. This does not mean that I would not like to see the Mississippi state records that were carried off to Washington during the War between the States or the Mississippi files of the United States Food Administration returned to Mississippi. I would like to have the records of the Office of Price Administration and of the Selective Service left in Mississippi when this war is ended. I believe that serious consideration should be given to depositories built and administered jointly by the federal and state governments, under the general supervision of the archivist of the United States. Mr. William J. Van Schreeven of Virginia and Miss Margaret C. Norton of Illinois probably would not agree with me, for they have new and spacious buildings. This suggestion might be challenged as a further invasion of states' rights, but only a few misguided Southern Democrats and the Republicans seem to worry nowadays about states' rights.

Mr. Holmes has pointed out the possibility that the federal-state system would contribute toward the raising of the standards of archival work and the stimulation of serious and productive research. This would also greatly contribute toward the preservation of state and local records.

The argument has been presented that the depositories would probably be located in state capitals and in many instances distant from the federal offices in the state. These distances would not be as great as the distance to a central depository in Washington. Each depository should have a staff sufficient to supply information to federal offices from noncurrent records in its custody. I do not believe that any citizen who has attempted to deal with the federal government believes that its agencies ever get in such haste as to warrant more expeditious service than can be supplied by mail.

The argument has been advanced that the historian would be hampered by decentralization. That is probably true, but I am wondering if local and state history has not been neglected long enough in this country. We might all be better citizens if we gave more attention to local and state history in preparation for an understanding of national history. Could the records in Washington, in many instances, already be too voluminous for the historian?

Now, let us suppose that federal-state co-operation could be achieved so far as buildings and personnel are concerned. What about the federal records to be housed and administered? Let us, for the sake of discussion, set down a general rule that records produced in regional offices be placed in depositories in states where such regional offices are located, and that records produced in local offices administered by the regional office be placed in depositories in states where such local offices are located. That rule appears to be rather simple.

One of the district banks of the Federal Reserve System is located in Atlanta. Its records would be placed in the federal-state depository in Georgia. The district Federal Reserve bank at Atlanta has a branch in New Orleans. The records of this branch would be placed in the federal-state depository in Louisiana. This might not cause any serious complications.

We might then consider the records of the regional and local offices of the Department of Agriculture. The administrative office of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration for Mississippi is located in Jackson and its records would remain in Mississippi. The regional office concerned with cotton of the Division of Agricultural Statistics of the Agricultural Marketing Service of the Department of Agriculture covers the eleven Confederate States and Missouri and Kentucky. This office is located in Gulfport and its records would remain in Mississippi. The office of the Food Products Inspection Service of the Division of Fruits and Vegetables of the Agricultural Marketing Service responsible for the territory of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi is located in New Orleans. Its records would remain in Louisiana. The office of the Market News Service of the Division of Fruits and Vegetables of the Agricultural Marketing Service responsible for Louisiana and Mississippi is located in New Orleans. Its records would remain in Louisiana. One office of Federal Grain Inspection of the Grain Division of the Agricultural Marketing Service covers Louisiana, south Mississippi, and southwest Alabama. This office is located in New Orleans and its records would remain in Louisiana. Another office of Federal Grain Inspection is located in Memphis, but is responsible only for north Mississippi. Under my rules, these records would be sent to Nashville but would pertain in no way to Tennessee.

The farther we go, the more confused we might become. In fact,

I have just about met myself coming back. Perhaps we should at this point accept Mr. Holmes' fine suggestion that we put these field records of federal agencies in temporary warehouses until we make up our minds—until we can give further study to the three suggested solutions, to decreasing the number of typewriters in federal service, to the destruction of useless federal records, and to microphotography.

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ARMY FIELD RECORDS

EVERY individual, it is commonly said, has certain idiosyncrasies. One of mine is that I started out to become a historian and have never been able to get over it. In spite of having been employed for some time as an archivist, in spite of my present duties, I cannot help thinking of myself primarily as a historian. It is as such that I contribute to this discussion of regional depositories for federal records. My interests and the fortunes of employment have directed my thinking on the subject into two main streams, local history on the one hand and military history on the other. Where these two flow together to become western military history is formed the beginning of a turbulent whitewater course of great promise, which has been explored but little. It is the rocks and mud and roots underlying this particular stream—in short, the records that hold it within its banks—that are my concern.

It may not be a pleasant fact, but fact it is that most—and I mean most—of the historians of this country have only the faintest conception of the source materials available among the records of the federal government. This is particularly noticeable in the case of War Department and army records, but it is scarcely less so for those of most other agencies as well. In fact, scholars are so innocent of the true possibilities that they frequently mistake relatively unimportant collections or parts of collections for something much larger and consequently bring out articles and books based on a very small part of the sources available. This is especially, although by no means exclusively, true of the local historians.

To avoid criticism of others, allow me to use my own case as an example. Longer ago than I like to admit, I started to study the history of the United States Army in the Pacific Northwest. With the advice of a professor for whom I still have the greatest admiration as a scholar and teacher, I started with the records of Fort Vancouver, which were available locally, happen to be unusually complete, and, as such field records go, are extremely valuable. It was thought that they would be the real basis of the study, although it was realized that there must be some additional material among the records of higher commands. Much new material could have been presented and the study as then planned would have contributed something to the knowledge of the Pacific Northwest and of the army in the West, but it would not—it could not—have been the real story of the army in that region because it would have been based on fragmentary sources. It would have been narrow, distorted, and incomplete. I do not believe that this is the kind of local history that we want to produce, but it is the kind that will continue to be written until scholars become aware of the greater sources available.

Fortunately, the opportunity came for me to work with War Department and army records, and it became more and more apparent that the records of Fort Vancouver and even those of the Division of the Pacific and the Department of Oregon, the next higher commands and those that have the highest order of peace-time field records, were relatively insignificant—even for local history, mind you—when compared to the records of the Secretary of War, the headquarters of the army, the adjutant general, the quartermaster general, the commissary general of subsistence, the chief of engineers, the inspector general, the judge advocate general, the chief of ordnance, and the surgeon general. The records, which can be lumped together as the records of the War Department, are the most important single source for the military history not only of the Pacific Northwest but of every section of the country since the War of 1812, if not since the Revolution. By learning something of the departmental records and thus being able to re-evaluate the field records as compared to them, I was forced to the conclusion that the departmental records must be the real basis of my study and that the field records contain only supplementary information of secondary value. Military history simply cannot be written from field records of this type alone.

Let me illustrate with some specific instances. I was naturally

interested in the entire supply problem for the Department of Oregon and was on the lookout for any material that threw light on it. Incidental information was picked up bit by bit in the post records, but from those of the quartermaster general's office it was possible to piece together a reasonably good general picture. The entire system was described in great detail, however, in the proceedings of a court of inquiry held at Fort Vancouver to investigate charges preferred against an assistant quartermaster at that post in the 1850's. Information to be obtained nowhere else, especially about transportation on the Columbia River and communications between Fort Vancouver and other posts, is contained in this verbatim testimony on file among the court-martial records of the judge advocate general's office.¹ Or take the 125-page report of an inspection of the Department of the Pacific made in 1854 by Col. Joseph K. F. Mansfield. Inspector General Mansfield visited every post on the Pacific Coast and, as a trained observer, wrote a report that is the best description of that area, not only from the military but also from the social and economic points of view, that it has ever been my good fortune to find.² Sources such as these are not to be found in field records.

This point has been emphasized because it has a direct bearing on the problem under discussion. Local historians have tended to urge the retention of field records in local depositories in the mistaken belief that this would best serve the interests of local history. I believe that exactly the opposite of this is true, that the interests of local history would be served much better by the centralization of both field and departmental records in one great research center such as the National Archives. Granted the distance to Washington from such isolated frontiers as the Pacific Coast, the point is that to do a satisfactory job the trip is going to have to be made anyway, and it is more economical in the long run to do as much as possible of one's research in a single place where the closely interrelated field and departmental records may be used together. Nor should it be forgotten that some of the best local history is being written by persons who are not living in the sections under study. This condition will increase, to the benefit of local history, in direct proportion to the centralization of the records and the knowledge of them possessed

¹ Judge Advocate General's Office, Courts Martial, HH-896, in the National Archives.

² The Adjutant General's Office, Miscellaneous File, 282 (formerly AGO, 162-M-1855), in the National Archives.

by historians. If our graduate schools had any understanding of the possibilities for dissertations in local history—worthwhile studies of general as well as sectional interest—which could be made from materials already in the National Archives, there would be a regular bull market in that field.

Incidentally, there could be no better way to force the importance of these sources upon the consciousness of historians than to encourage the publication of a series of monographs in various fields based on these materials and written by persons who know them thoroughly. Such studies could not be ignored—nor could the source materials after the publication of a few volumes based on them. Finding mediums are useful for certain purposes, but they cannot possibly get across the message as forcefully as well-documented studies or even a series of published volumes of documents. Despite the importance of this to the National Archives and to the historical profession, not a single first-class work of this sort has come out of the staff of the National Archives in the eight years of its existence. Reconciling one's self to this is the peculiar form of purgatory for those who would pass from the historical to the archival profession. It is particularly tragic when promising students of history learn more about valuable records than any outsider can ever hope to know but are given no opportunity to use the acquired knowledge in their real field.

In at least one respect the field records of the army differ from those of other agencies, and confusion will result if this is not recognized. Although both are field units, a distinction must be made between geographical commands, such as posts, districts, departments, divisions, corps areas, and service commands, and tactical commands, such as regiments, brigades, divisions, corps, armies, and expeditions. The records of the latter, the fighting units, are not of much significance except for periods of war but bulk very large for each of our periodic crises. The 130 volumes of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* serve to support this statement; there are at least 50,000 cubic feet of such records for the World War. Obviously these records are of great importance for both administrative and historical purposes, and it is equally obvious, since they cannot be left on the battlefield and few of the organizations have an existence of long duration, that field records of this type must be centralized. Large quantities of them should be and

are being destroyed, but many of them, especially those of higher echelons, should be preserved carefully and in close proximity to the departmental records they supplement.

The records of geographical commands, on the other hand, are comparable to the field records of other federal agencies and presumably can be treated in a similar manner. Some of the advantages of centralization have already been suggested, and I feel sure that my own belief in the matter is already apparent. The War Department has long had a policy, unfortunately not always followed in practice, of having sent to the adjutant general's office the records of discontinued commands and abandoned stations. Had these been left in the field, no one place would have had anything of much value, and those who needed to use them would have had to travel widely, to say the least. Brought together in one place where groups of them can be used with each other and with the records of the War Department, they become of considerable administrative and historical value—the whole being, in this case, greater than the sum of its parts. This policy is sound and ought to be extended even more than it has been to still-existing posts retaining records for which they have no further administrative use.

The army, and consequently its record system, differs from most other agencies in one other respect. The Interior Department's General Land Office has little in common with the Office of Indian Affairs or the National Park Service, and both the bureau and field records of these practically independent services reflect the differences of purpose between them. Throughout the War Department and the army, however, both in the various bureaus and in the field, there is now and always has been a practically uniform system of record keeping. There are variations, of course, but anyone who really knows the records of one office or field establishment for any period can easily understand the records of others for the same period. Because of this uniformity, and because of the endorsement system, which has been used throughout the army from a very early period, the advantages of centralization and the disadvantages of decentralization are increased.

Dossiers are built up as correspondence is passed through perhaps half a dozen or more offices, both departmental and field, and the only place that the complete story can be found is in whichever office takes final action or receives final instructions. Countless tons of paper

have doubtless been saved as a result, but it is extremely convenient to have the records of various offices and field establishments together when one starts chasing a tempting morsel found registered, say, in the adjutant general's office. Perhaps it started with an inspection report on Fort Vancouver, which had been sent to the headquarters of the army; the commanding general sent it to the adjutant general with comments, and the latter asked for the opinion of the quartermaster general who made a recommendation, which was sent to the Secretary of War for approval; and on the seventh endorsement it ended up at the headquarters of the Department of Oregon with instructions to inform Lieutenant Ducrot, the acting assistant quartermaster at Fort Vancouver, that he must not give away blankets to the Indians without specific authorization even if they were freezing.

This system is adequate for local administrative use and works beautifully for both administrative and historical purposes when the records are centralized. It does impose difficulties, however, for local historical use. Certain records, in general of little or no interest to scholars, are needed permanently at field stations for administrative purposes. Most of these must be kept at the posts themselves to be of any real value and are not suitable for regional depositories. Others are needed for only a short time locally but are of semipermanent value in Washington. The greatest percentage, as in the case of records of tactical commands, are of no permanent value for any purpose and can be destroyed after a relatively short period of time.

The Division of War Department Archives at the National Archives recently made a very revealing study of the field records problem. Using the published inventories of the Survey of Federal Archives for three states selected as representative of various conditions, Georgia, Indiana, and Oregon, the conclusion was reached that 54.5 per cent of the army field records reported for those states have already been authorized for disposition, that 18.1 per cent more ought to be reported for disposition immediately, and that 4.5 per cent are not records at all. Thus, 77.1 per cent of the problem disappears or can be made to disappear. It was estimated further that 17.8 per cent of the field records are of the type needed permanently at the field stations. This leaves 1.9 per cent to be transferred to Washington, 1.5 per cent that might be suitable for local depositories, and 2 per cent of undetermined character. For the country as

a whole, if the figures for these states are representative, this would mean less than 10,000 cubic feet of records to come to Washington or only about 10 per cent of the present War Department holdings of the National Archives. Similarly, it would leave less than 8,000 cubic feet to be divided among possible regional depositories. As that report concludes, "The idea of establishing regional depositories thus has very little pertinence with respect to the field records of the War Department."³

Turning again to the local historian, it seems to me that he must look elsewhere than to regional depositories for the answer to his problem, at least so far as military history is concerned. First, he must learn that most of his sources are already in Washington in the National Archives. Second, he should encourage the centralization of the remaining few that are still scattered throughout the country. Finally, he should get behind and back the initial efforts that have already been made in the publication of important series of documents, by both printing and microfilming. This last is the real solution for the students of local history, and it is hoped that, through the co-operation of universities and state historical societies with the National Archives, progress in this direction will continue.

There is a lot of talk at these meetings about the archival profession. As a parting shot—and as a historian—I should like to remind you that preserving records is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. The only standards of archival work deserving of a second thought are those which are designed to preserve valuable records for use, either administrative or scholarly or both. All policies, including the one now under discussion, must be formulated with this above all else in mind. If this criterion is applied, the military records of the United States will continue to be centralized in Washington and the established policy in this regard extended.

JESSE S. DOUGLAS

The National Archives

³ Memorandum of Chief, Division of War Department Archives, to Director of Records Accessioning and Preservation, August 25, 1942, on "Field Records That Might Be Placed in Local Depositories."

THE NEED FOR REGIONAL DEPOSITORIES FOR FEDERAL RECORDS

IN PLANNING a permanent program for federal records in the states the issue of centralization versus decentralization is fundamental. Assuming that it were feasible to house in Washington five to ten million cubic feet of archives (and it seems to me that any addition to overcrowded Washington of huge storage facilities would be of doubtful wisdom), the military developments of the present war serve to emphasize the virtues of a program of decentralization. This danger was foreseen a long time ago. A humorous skit in *Lloyd's Evening Post* of London in 1774 pictured two Americans on a visit to London in 1974, finding it in ruins like Baalbek, Persepolis, Athens, and Rome. Britain, largely because of her injustice to America, the visitors discovered, had declined, and the colonies had become the seat of empire. The view that some day New York might be to London what Byzantium was to Rome was widely held in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Despite such fashionable predictions, however, it is interesting to note that our own national capitol was burned long before military aviation had come into existence and that actually two wars of the nineteenth century endangered the archives of Washington. Today, with aerial warfare, the complete centralization of records has proven hazardous and impractical. When the archives of Southern Rhodesia were sent to London, the authorities may have felt that they were far safer there than in East Africa. Nonetheless they were totally destroyed during the great fire of London of 1940¹ while Il Duce's "Balcony Empire" never seriously threatened Britain's East African possessions.

Therefore, we must plan our archival buildings not only for peace but for war-time as well. Established principles of military engineering and protective concealment will determine the plans, construction, and arrangement of such buildings. In the long run they will also dictate the choice of locations for housing our records.²

Granted that some form of decentralization of archives were in-

¹ See THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST, v (April, 1942), 130, and Southern Rhodesia, Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, July 2, 1941, p. 1900-932.

² The trend toward decentralization in Great Britain was disclosed as early as 1910 in a report of the Royal Commission of that year, and, at least temporarily, the war has accelerated the process. See R. B. Morris, "The Challenge of Historical Materials," THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST, iv (April, 1941), 91, and "The Federal Archives of New York City: Opportunities for Historical Research," *American Historical Review*, 42 (January, 1937), 271.

stituted and that the bulk of the federal central office records were stored in and around Washington, Mr. Holmes has pertinently raised the question as to the practicability of keeping the records of the federal government outside Washington either at or near their present locations or of sending them to the nearest regional depository that may be established. I think there will be general agreement among archivists that records which have an integral part in the administration of a federal bureau or agency—such as the archives of field offices—should ultimately be transferred to Washington, although it might be prudent to have microfilm copies of such records sent to strategically located depositories outside the national capital. Let us then be consistent and maintain that archives that are of prime importance to the operation of a local federal office or are of regional significance should not be sent to Washington.

Is it practicable to draw the line? In most cases the rule will be simple and the enforcement of it perfectly practicable. Certainly it possesses many advantages from the administrative point of view. My illustrations are drawn largely from New York City where I have had some first-hand experience in studying federal archives. A number of years ago there were stored in the quartermaster supply office in Brooklyn, army transport shipping records of the first World War, including material from such ports of embarkation as Norfolk, together with other records from posts as far away as Fort Sam Houston, Fort Oglethorpe, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. There was no logical reason for keeping them in Brooklyn. Staff officers planning embarkation movements of troops today would want to study them in Washington where they properly belong. The same is true of records originating in the Bureau of Aircraft Production, in the finance office of the army's Second Corps Area. Such material might be of value to the War Department or the War Production Board today, but its possible value to army officers in the Second Corps Area seems negligible. It would also be more logical and more convenient for students of the activities of the Department of Agriculture to study at one central location in Washington the records, at present scattered in countless localities throughout the country, of, let us say, the field stations of the Division of Virus Serum Control, of the Meat Inspection Division, or even of the Soil Conservation Service, than to be compelled to visit these many local agencies. This would also hold true of field offices of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which

according to Treasury policy and practice are controlled and administered from Washington.

On the other hand, the records of certain federal agencies or bureaus are fundamentally regional in character or are of far greater value to the local operation of the agencies than to the central needs of the superior Washington offices. In such cases there is often a very considerable local interest in the study and examination of such materials, and it would be perfectly logical to expect the investigator to go to the localities or regions to consult such records. I suggest four major categories, but there are doubtless numerous others. These four bulk large, however, in the total volume of federal archives in the states. They are (1) the archives of custom houses, (2) the archives relating to immigration and naturalization, (3) the archives of such regional federal agencies as the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Bonneville Power Administration, and (4) the archives of the federal courts and of the Department of Justice. In all the above categories, except insofar as the safety of the records was endangered by remaining *in situ* or their removal was physically necessary because of inadequate storage space, I can see no advantage in sending noncurrent records to Washington.

Questions involving such documents as ship manifests and customs declarations constantly come before the federal customs authorities of the ports of entry. It is to the advantage of such officials to have a good deal of this material close at hand. It is true that the Washington offices of the Treasury and Commerce departments prepare statistical compilations of revenue collected, of imports, and of exports, but for such purposes the individual local papers are not needed. Furthermore, these ports of entry are limited in number. The effective use a historian can make of customhouse records when they are left in their offices of origin has been demonstrated by Professor Albion.

There is constant demand for immigration and naturalization records, especially in connection with proof of citizenship. It is conceded that many immigrants finally move considerable distances from their original ports of entry, so that there would be advantage in having microfilm copies of all such materials in Washington for consultation there as well as at the ports of entry. In this case, too, as with customs records, since the major ports of entry for immigrants to this country are limited in number, we are not faced by the mis-

cellaneous and scattered archival distribution posed by the small field office or substation. It might be added that such records also shed valuable light on the history of ports of debarkation.

Mr. Holmes has thoroughly considered the problem presented by the archives of regional agencies, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, and it would be superfluous to say more at this time. It might also be added that certain agencies that record their transactions directly with individuals, such as many of the New Deal agencies mentioned by Mr. Holmes, seem to me to fit into the same category as the customs and immigration records, and that accordingly there would be little advantage in centralization.

Finally, in regard to the federal judicial records, I emphatically agree with Mr. Holmes that these should not be considered field records, because the courts possess a large measure of autonomy. As a matter of fact the problem of the federal judicial archives in the states is now so pressing that, if for no other reason, some form of regional depository, even if temporary or makeshift in character, will have to be devised and very quickly. At a meeting of the judges of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in June, 1942, it was decided that records generally prior to the year 1912 "were no longer needed in the transaction of the current business of the Court with the exception of the permanent minutes, the judgment rolls, the opinions of the Judges, the judgment dockets, and of certain old historical matter most of which covers the period prior to the year 1789 and which was collected under the supervision of" the late Judge Hough. Mr. George J. H. Follmer, clerk of the court, reported to Judge Knox at that time that much of the records are "unindexed and [their] contents unknown to the Court, the bar, or the public." On October 1, 1941, the volume of records on hand was estimated as exceeding 550 tons in weight. The case papers fill the equivalent of 10,500 legal-size cabinet drawers, and the dockets, minute and calendar books, and other volumes occupy 400 linear feet of shelving. But of this total, 85 per cent has accumulated since 1900, and bankruptcy records under the act of 1898 account for 50 per cent of the total of all classes of records. In general, the material in the Southern District is accumulating at the rate of 12 to 15 tons yearly.

Now when the clerk of the court admits that the bulk of the material is a *terra incognita* as far as court, lawyers, and public are

concerned, I do not see how the court can dismiss such vast quantities of material as possessing no historical value. It was purely fortuitous that Judge Hough collected the admiralty records of the colonial and state courts. The inventory of the Survey of Federal Archives revealed that there is a large quantity of first-rate historical material in vice-admiralty that he had not segregated and was not aware of. As regards bankruptcy, the court clerk states that out of a total of 10,149 proceedings before the court, 6,121 came under the bankruptcy acts of 1801, 1841, 1867, and 1898. The court wishes to dispose of this material entirely; yet the economic and social historians are quite likely to find far more material of historical significance here than in the cases of prize, piracy, and maritime matters, which, because of their antiquity, the court wishes to preserve. The antiquity of a document should not be the primary test of its importance.

Let us consider these bankruptcy papers a little more closely. In the first place, these archives constitute the chief activity of the court—a doctor to financially sick corporations and individuals, who, as a result of the swing in the business cycle, have been forced into involuntary bankruptcy, or who, through enabling legislation representing a great advance over English debtor laws, have gone into voluntary bankruptcy. These papers may help determine the correlation between unemployment and bankruptcy wage earners. With respect to business failures, Mr. Justice Douglas pointed out a number of years ago that no scientific correlation can be made until more is known respecting the causes of failures. These papers give us a detailed account of what happened to these financially sick corporations and people, an account that no historian or economist has as yet taken the trouble to study. Corporate reorganization under section 77b of the act of 1898, as modified by the act establishing the Securities and Exchange Commission, is one of the most interesting and significant phases of industrial and finance capital *in extremis*. Must we lose these data and have nothing left for the study of these companies save the formal judgment roll or the opinion of the judges? As Professor Herbert Heaton has shown in his study of nonimportation, 1806-1812, the papers of federal district courts can be of prime importance in the study of our economic history. But are prize, piracy, and nonimportation any more significant to historians than bankruptcy?

The historical importance of the bankruptcy records in federal dis-

strict courts outside New York is also evident. For example, the district court at Richmond has twenty-five feet of bankruptcy case papers, 1842-1845, based on the bankruptcy law of 1841. Writing on *Sixty Years of Branch Banking in Virginia*, Professor Starnes stated that "the conclusion is justifiable that the banking system of Virginia prior to 1860 compared favorably with that of any other state in the Union . . . we have been unable to discover that any incorporated bank ever failed, or that any man ever lost a dollar by a Virginia bank note until the banks were engulfed in the general ruin caused by the Civil War." As Dr. Kathleen Bruce points out, Professor Starnes' study appears to have been made without benefit of court papers. Doubtless his important conclusions would have been enriched and possibly modified by a study of the records of the Bank of the Valley of Virginia, the Bank of Virginia, the Farmers' Bank, and the Bank of Philippi, all in the custody of the district court at Richmond.

As a matter of fact, too few historians have ever studied the federal archives in the states and only now are graduate schools beginning to realize the wealth of research material that lies buried in these records. The judicial and legal records offer especially rich opportunities for investigation by social scientists. The study of the Department of Justice made by Homer Cummings and his staff was based wholly on Washington records. No consideration was given to the administration of the department outside Washington, and the authors were dependent entirely upon field reports from the district offices. The next generation of scholars should explore these federal records outside Washington in order to see how federal policy was translated into action.

With these considerations in mind, it seems to me that archivists and historians should be in unanimous agreement that we do not want such records as those of the Southern District Court of New York destroyed. On the other hand, we must recognize that the court does not have the physical facilities to continue housing this body of material. By being kept in outlying warehouses their future safety is really jeopardized. Therefore, if the archival authorities oppose the destruction of these papers, they are bound to propose an alternative. Failure to do so promptly will lead to a chaotic archival situation in New York City. We do not want a repetition of such incidents as occurred there in the early 1900's, when many tons of customhouse

records were disposed of without regard to their historical importance and a private dealer in New York purchased for a song the bulk of the ship manifests for the ports of New York and Baltimore, 1790-1810.

Many of the objections Mr. Holmes raises to permanent regional archives are weighty and cannot be lightly dismissed. Were we to set up regional depositories at the headquarters of the nine army corps areas, for example, Philadelphia, Richmond, Detroit, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Los Angeles might consider themselves slighted. To work in co-operation with state archivists in the erection of jointly operated and controlled buildings involves legislation in the forty-eight states as well as Congressional enactment. While it might be useful to undertake such a program in a few judiciously selected states for experimental purposes, the larger program would be dependent in very large measure upon the federal government's putting up the bulk of the money. Mr. Holmes has himself considered the weightiest objection to such a plan. In general it would set up archival centers at considerable distances from such important centers of federal activity as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco.

In the meantime the nation requires a practical and immediate program. In planning such a program we must not only plan for the storage of the records of the vastly expanding war agencies that will be dismantled in large measure after the war, but we must also satisfy the demands of custodians of federal records in the states that we relieve them of large and historically important segments of material, which the National Archives under present space conditions is physically incapable of housing. Temporary storage depots in nine or a dozen key cities of the country could be quickly and rather economically set up. Large staffs would not be necessary, as the immediate task would be that of storage rather than of classification. For the time being the rapidly accumulating mountain of such non-current records could be safeguarded until sufficient funds were available and interest aroused to ensure the careful examination and classification of such materials. When the time is propitious, classification should be made roughly along the following lines: (1) Records that should be destroyed without microcopying, such as duplicates, triplicates, and timesheets; (2) records that should be destroyed after microcopying; (3) records that should be stored regionally, microcopies being sent to Washington for consultation

by central offices; (4) records that should be transferred to Washington.

In the long run, military and fiscal, no less than archival, considerations will dictate the kind of permanent housing these regional archives are to receive. In the meantime, let us get the historical materials out of the busy federal agencies in the states and into places of safety. Some form of regional storage would seem to be the answer.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

EDWARD F. ROWSE, Editor

The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Air Raid Protection Code for Federal Buildings and Their Contents, prepared by the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Protection, and approved by the Federal Works Administrator. (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1942. Pp. xiv, 173. \$.20.)

Code for the Protection of Federal Buildings and Their Contents from Subversive Hostile Acts, prepared by the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Subversive Activities, and approved by the Federal Works Administrator. (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1942. Pp. vii, 39. \$.10.)

For archivists—federal, state, municipal, and private—the importance of these codes will depend upon the extent to which the measures relating to the protection of records are enforced or observed by the federal government, and are known and used by state and local officials, and by private individuals. Both codes were prepared at the request of the President to assist the Public Buildings Administration in the execution of a nation-wide program of protection for federal buildings. Because of their general application, the Office of Civilian Defense has ordered reprints of both, distributing the *Air Raid Protection Code* to building managers and owners, and distributing the *Code for Protection . . . from Subversive Hostile Acts* to the executive officers of various municipalities. The application of either code by non-federal agencies will depend however upon the apparent danger of aggression or subversive action, and upon the extent to which the codes actually reach other individuals concerned with the use and protection of buildings or their contents.

The codes are mutually important, and to some extent duplicate each other. Both define many of the same terms, both use the same classification of building construction, both establish the same scale of priorities based upon the functional use of the buildings for war purposes. Many other points are also common to both codes, and they are intended to be used together, for steps relating to the survey of the building, and the organization of fire-defense, first-aid and rescue squads are not supposed to be duplicated. There are two codes, probably because there were two committees, and the duplication would be unwarranted except for the fact that the *Code for Protection . . . from Subversive Hostile Acts* should only be applied by custodians of buildings used for essential war work.

For archivists the importance of the *Code for Protection . . . from Subversive Hostile Acts* relates to the protection of records and the preservation of their integrity from subversive destruction, fire, or theft. In so far as

America is endangered by aggression, the importance of the *Air Raid Protection Code* on the other hand relates to its provisions for the evacuation of records not needed for war business, for protective measures for material retained for use, for the reallocation of space so that the most valuable records are safest, and for the salvage of damaged materials. In the past great damage has been done to records by hurried evacuation, and the code requires that all steps for the protection of records be completed before air raids are imminent. Especially helpful to custodians of records is an extensive appendix, with diagrams illustrating not only blackout methods, the protection of skylights, and shelter areas, but also illustrating the distribution of filing equipment, so that it serves the dual purpose of protecting more important records and staff. Most helpful is Chapter x which lists agencies, persons, and publications to whom records custodians can turn, and which discusses the problem of classification of records needing various degrees of protection, and the problem of physical housing. Unfortunately the section on salvage is too brief, and the extent to which burned, or water soaked records can be salvaged is not emphasized by specific example. Information on salvage is needed not only for war, but for peace, and the republication of this chapter, with an expanded discussion of salvage, including lamination and dehydration would be justified, so that the information can be placed in the hands of the custodians of records and their friends for their use and consideration, and so it would not be obfuscated by the other considerations of the code.

DAVID C. DUNIWAY

The National Archives

The North Carolina Historical Commission, Forty Years of Public Service, 1903-1943. Bulletin No. 43, of the North Carolina Historical Commission. (Raleigh, N.C. 1942. Pp. 115, 15 illustrations.)

The addition of only a library binding and a shortened title might easily have transformed this lucidly written and well illustrated paper-covered bulletin into a best-seller among archivists, historical society librarians, and local historians. Within the space of the first fifty pages is related interestingly and succinctly an account of the formation of this commission and its achievements to the present time. In this portion of the bulletin is described the archival materials in the commission's custody, the utilization of these materials, the publication policy of the historical commission and the Legislative Reference Library, the enactment of legislation to authorize and advance this work, the significance and use of the Hall of History, the erection of memorials and markers, and the co-operative work of the WPA and NYA.

The section entitled "The Historical Commission—Past, Present, and Future" is a splendid résumé of the commission's progress as well as a glimpse of its plans for the future. Although portions of this section are repetitious

of some of the introduction, this should not be construed as a fault in as much as many readers studiously avoid "introductions." Furthermore, such a repetition serves as a forceful reminder to the citizens and officials of those states, which are remiss in the preservation of their historical and archival heritage, that they still have to meet and surmount the barriers which confronted the people of North Carolina in this field of endeavor forty years ago.

Seven appendices occupy the remainder of the 115 pages of this bulletin. The source material presented in these appendices makes this publication an indispensable aid to anyone attempting serious research among the historical records of North Carolina. The first appendix contains a codification of the laws governing the North Carolina Historical Commission. Brief but adequate biographies of the members of the commission 1903-1942 constitute the second appendix. Appendix III, "Materials in the Commission's Archives," is important enough to have been a separate publication. Descriptions indicating the kinds and quantities of records are given under the following categories: state archives (including legislative, executive, judicial records), county archives, town archives, United States of America archives relating to North Carolina, foreign archives relating to North Carolina, personal and unofficial collections, maps, newspapers, pamphlets, and textbooks. The next three appendices are bibliographical, listing respectively the publications of the North Carolina Historical Commission (including the writings of its staff members), the North Carolina Historical Record Survey, and the Survey of Federal Archives in North Carolina. Appendix VII is a complete list of busts, tablets, and markers placed throughout the state by the historical commission.

This publication is not only a record of the achievement of the North Carolina Historical Commission; it is also a memorial to those citizens, public officials, and legislators who had the vision and courage to work for the preservation and dissemination of the knowledge of their state's historical resources. In this writer's opinion this bulletin deserves a place on archivists' and librarians' reference shelves along with Jenkinson or Muller, Feith, and Fruin. Although not a textbook for archivists, it could very well serve as a manual by virtue of the numerous examples, rather than theories, it contains regarding the inception and administration of a modern, well-balanced American historical agency.

LEON DEVALINGER, JR.

The Delaware Archives

Catalogue of Archival Material, Hall of Records, State of Maryland. Publications of the Hall of Records Commission, No. 2. (Annapolis. 1942. Pp. 161.)

If one were inclined to quibble about the titles of books, one might make a case for calling this volume a "Guide to the Holdings of the Maryland Hall

of Records." It contains not only descriptions of archival material—state and local government records and church records—but also listings of newspaper files and of miscellaneous manuscript collections received from private sources. In arrangement the volume follows the structure of government, with the sections for the records of government agencies grouped under the following headings: executive, legislative, judicial, financial, military, miscellaneous state offices, county records, and city and town. Following the sections dealing with government records are those for church records, newspapers, and private manuscript collections. The entire holdings of the Hall of Records at the end of August, 1942, are covered, and one can only quote enviously from the excellent introduction: "Every paper, every volume which had come into the Hall of Records before September 1, 1942 is arranged in order, accessioned and available for use." All materials listed in the catalogue are open to the public, and typewritten, photostat, or microfilm copies of them can be obtained, certified if necessary.

A typical section dealing with the records of a government agency consists of a brief historical sketch of the agency and its records, the length of the sketch increasing when previously published information on the agency and its records is scant; references to works used in preparing the sketch; and a description of the records, including citations when portions of the records have been published in the series *Archives of Maryland*, a statement of the quantity of the records in terms of boxes and volumes, and the Hall of Records accession numbers, which are useful both as finding aids and as a means of showing the date of transfer.

The volume is of such high quality that only two slight improvements can be suggested. Its introduction indicates that indexes, shelf lists, and other finding aids exist for many of the records; references to these aids might well have been included in the catalogue. And in any new edition the compilers might also reconsider their decision to omit the index, though the present work can be used satisfactorily without one.

Credit for compiling such a comprehensive guide a mere eight years after the establishment of the Hall of Records goes to Morris L. Radoff, its present archivist, who wrote the introduction and most of the rest of the volume, and to Gust Skordas, a member of the Hall of Records staff, who prepared practically all the sections under the headings Financial and Military.

HERBERT E. ANGEL

The National Archives

Preliminary Inventory of the Council of National Defense Records, 1916-1921, issued by the National Archives, Preliminary Inventory, No. 2. (Washington, D.C. December, 1942. Pp. xvii, 75. Processed.)

In the halting progress of the Council of National Defense there was epitomized the United States' first experience in mobilization for world con-

flict. Authorized in 1916 as a planning body to co-ordinate "industries and resources for the national security and welfare," the six cabinet officers who comprised its original membership before long were supplemented by a Civilian Advisory Commission. Then, after the United States entered the first World War, the council passed through a complex variety of changes. It became a channel for government propaganda and a sounding-board for public opinion. To its direction fell such diverse tasks as Liberty Loan drives, the increase of farm production, control of food supplies, fuel conservation, munitions, transportation, labor, medicine, metals, engineering, education, and clothing. At least theoretically there were all of 184,000 local councils associated with the national council, and many of these affiliates became self-appointed guardians against allegedly treasonous disloyalty. Most of these multifarious activities, however, were only temporarily under the council's control. New organizations were constantly stemming from it or being created as separate agencies to assume some of its duties. Perhaps the most important of its issue was the War Industries Board.

Questions of jurisdiction and similar obstacles plagued the council. Indeed, it is not surprising that an inventory of the council's records offers evidence that competent operation of such an amorphous body was extremely difficult. As a matter of fact, this is so obvious that the inventory itself gives an impression of unevenness due to the disappointing absence of many important records. Very noticeably, what must be some of its most vital documents have been removed from the council's files for inclusion in the records of the War Industries Board, the Food Administration, the War Labor Administration, the Surgeon General's Office, or still other collections. For example, it is disconcerting to find that the council's Committee on Labor's investigations of the cost of living, mediation, conciliation, wages, and hours of employment are reported as "probably" transferred to the War Labor Administration whose records have been destroyed. On the other hand, it is not exactly encouraging to note that the inventory features rather prominently the activities of the council's Advisory Committee on the Purchase of Public Animals and Remount Service. At times the fragmentary nature of the records would seem to be due not only to transfer to other record collections, but also to the evanescent enthusiasm which soon evaporated to leave an erstwhile committee without any tangible expression of its existence.

By co-ordinating the records of the council with those of the Food Administration, the War Industries Board, and other agencies whose records have been inventoried by the archives staff, the investigator has at hand the working materials for an interesting synthesis. It seems regrettable, however, that a better integration of these records could not have been made available both to government administrators and to independent historians early in the present war-time crisis. In the very adequate introduction to the council's record inventory it is stated that there will of necessity be a thorough winnowing

of the chaff before a definitive rearrangement of the council's records. A final inventory will then be issued. But it seems questionable that such items as telephone directories of well-known cities, a card list of American newspapers, laundry books, and similar entries should have been allowed to encumber even a preliminary inventory. This is not to imply, however, that the preliminary inventory has not been well made. The units of description are as logical as the rather chaotic organization of the council would permit. Descriptions of the items are adequate. There is a good index.

Doubtless the inventory will be of limited value to government administrators. But to historians it offers an opportunity for service: critical examination of the Council of National Defense's activities. A few pages of the inventory are given to the records of the council's Reconstruction Research Division; they may have particular significance in the days of rebuilding that are yet to come.

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SHORTER NOTICES

EDWARD F. ROWSE, Editor

The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

In the *Fifth* and *Sixth Reports of the Archivist of the Hall of Records*, 1939-40, 1940-41 (Annapolis. Hall of Records, 1940 and 1941. Pp. 31 and 38), the first to be published (the first four were addressed to the Hall of Records Commission alone and not made public), is shown the progress that can be made in a state archival agency, once that agency is established and placed in competent hands. County records have come in in gratifying amounts, state records as well. Private gifts are noted, and progress is definitely shown in the acquisition, preservation, and making available for use the records of the state and its subdivisions. Indexes to groups of records important for local history and genealogy have been made. Dr. Radoff has every reason to be satisfied with the showing he and his staff have made.—EDWARD F. ROWSE

The first supplement to the *Union List of Microfilms*, issued in March by the Committee on Microphotography of the Philadelphia Bibliographical Center and Union Library Catalogue, lists almost three thousand entries from ninety-one institutions. The organization of the material is the same as in the original publication. Included for the first time are references to the microcopies of British research texts filmed under the war emergency program.—CHARLES W. PAAPE

NEWS NOTES

KARL L. TREVER, Editor
The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

Committees of the Society

The following list of current committees with the names of the chairman and such members as have accepted appointment has been received from the secretary:

Committee on Archival Research: Herman Kahn, chairman, Oliver W. Holmes, Howard Peckham, Morris L. Radoff, William J. Van Schreeven.

Committee on Uniform Legislation: A. R. Newsome, chairman, Richard B. Morris, Francis S. Philbrick.

Committee on Filing Equipment: Mrs. Virginia Leddy Gambrell, chairman, Nona M. Lucke.

Committee on Records Administration: Emmett J. Leahy, chairman.

Committee on Training of Archivists: Ernst Posner, chairman, Edwin A. Davis, Margaret C. Norton, A. J. Wall, C. E. Walton.

Committee on Public Relations: Winnie Allen, chairman, Dorothy Dodd, Philip C. Brooks.

Committee on Collection and Preservation of Materials for the History of Emergencies: Herbert A. Kellar, C. C. Crittenden.

Committee on International Relations: Gaston Litton, chairman.

Committee on Membership: Philip C. Brooks, chairman.

Committee on Publication Policies of Archival Agencies: Leon deValinger, Jr., chairman.

Committee on Nominations: Sargent B. Child, chairman.

Applications for Membership Approved by the Council

Michigan Historical Commission, Lansing, Michigan.

Henry H. Eddy, junior archivist, the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Mary G. Nye, Office of the Secretary of State, Montpelier, Vermont.

Frank N. Root, custodian of records, Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Robert A. Shiff, assistant archivist, Office of Records Administration, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

Harris H. Williams, Manuscript Division, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Harry B. Yoshpe, Historical Section, Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington, D.C.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The *Eighth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States* for the fiscal year 1941-1942, recently published, reflects the influence of the war on all functions of the National Archives. Chiefly as a result of the war-time pressure for space in government buildings, nearly three times as many records were accessioned as in any previous year. A descriptive list of the records received appears as an appendix. The *Report* also discusses the records administration program, which aims at the better care of record material in the agencies creating it, particularly in the many new war agencies, to the end that an adequate record of the experience of the government and people of the United States may be preserved.

A significant addition to the large body of naval records in the National Archives was made recently by the transfer of many of the files assembled by the Naval Records and Library Office, Navy Department. Although there are a few records relating to the Revolutionary War among them, most of them cover the period 1798-1910. They comprise the central files of the department up to 1842, when the bureau system was inaugurated; for the period subsequent to that, they consist of a selection from the bureau files of outstanding records relating to operations and of policy documents relating to logistics. Among them are letter books of the navy commissioners and other officials, muster rolls, squadron reports, diaries, minutes and journals, records of the Confederate navy, ship records, and records relating to privateers, prizes, claims, and courts martial. Practically all the federal archival sources for the study of United States naval history to 1911 are now concentrated in the National Archives.

Records in the National Archives relating to military affairs have been further increased by the receipt of the records of the Office of the Chief of the Chemical Warfare Service, 1918-1940; the records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, 1894-1923, completing the files of that Office in the National Archives from 1800 to 1923; and the central files of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1886-1942. The last named was the only major War Department bureau that had not previously transferred the main body of its noncurrent records to the National Archives.

Other recent accessions of importance include records of a number of Justice Department offices, 1853-1938, including those of the Pardon Attorney, the Claims Division, the Appointment Clerk's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Commerce Court (1910-1913); Forest Service records relating to the early conservation and forestry movement, 1882-1906; State Department records consisting of consular and diplomatic notes, dispatches, and instructions, 1906-1910, and treaties and statutes completing these two series in the National Archives to 1932 and 1941, respectively; and the general files of the Chief Clerk of the Labor Department, 1913-1942.

In accordance with its policy of preparing preliminary "finding mediums" of records of importance in relation to the present war effort, the National Archives has recently issued a *Preliminary Inventory of the Council of National Defense Records, 1916-1921*. The records of the council are of interest not only because of its importance as a policy-making agency during the last war but also because a large amount of material gathered by its Reconstruction Research Division is of value in connection with present post-war planning.

The archivist of the United States has announced the appointment of Dallas D. Irvine, formerly chief of the Division of War Department Archives, as assistant to the archivist, and Edward G. Campbell, a member of the staff since January, 1938, as chief of that division. Robert H. Bahmer, a member of the staff who has been serving on detail as chief of the Archival Service Unit of the Office of Records Administration in the Navy Department, has been named chief of the Division of Navy Department Archives, succeeding Nelson M. Blake, who has been called to military duty. Laura R. Hanes, assistant chief of the Division of Personnel and Pay Roll from July, 1935, to October, 1941, has rejoined the staff as chief of that division. Other appointments to the staff of the National Archives include those of Richard G. Wood, formerly state supervisor of the New Hampshire Historical Records Survey, and Eleanor Ross, formerly documents cataloguer at the Oregon State College Library. Among other members of the staff who have recently entered the armed services are Maxcy R. Dickson, Herman R. Friis, William E. Keegan, John R. Kennedy, William B. Rapley, and Charles L. Stewart.

THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

The President has recently given the library some very interesting papers relating to his early activities as a candidate for public office. They include correspondence, memoranda, schedules of meetings, press releases, election tabulations, and other materials concerning Mr. Roosevelt's unsuccessful campaign for nomination as United States senator in the New York Democratic primary election of 1914 and his campaign as vice-presidential candidate in 1920.

Another gift received from the President is a valuable collection of Roosevelt family papers consisting of forty-two ledgers, daybooks, receipt books, account books, and similar items relating to the business activities of his ancestors during the period 1715-1832. While some of this material deals with real-estate and merchandising transactions, most of it has to do with the sugar-importing business carried on by the Roosevelts in New York City. Represented in the collection are the business papers of Jacobus Roosevelt, 1715-1773; Isaac Roosevelt, 1755-1775; Isaac Roosevelt and Sons, 1774-1824; and James Roosevelt, 1794-1832.

Bernard M. Baruch has given the library a set of the rag-paper edition of the New York *Times* for the period 1931-1942. A gift from Miss Celia

Zepf, Hyde Park, New York, of a collection of 377 photographic plates of Hyde Park persons and scenes made by a local photographer during the period 1880-1900, will be invaluable for a reconstruction of the scene of the President's home community during his youth.

The *Third Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States as to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library* (9 pp.), just published, describes the work of the library during the fiscal year 1941-1942 and includes a descriptive list of the material presented to the library by the President and others. Copies of the *Report* may be obtained from the Division of Information and Publications of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Division of Manuscripts has received the papers of Senator George William Norris, of Nebraska, covering the major portion of his work in the United States Senate for a period of forty years. The collection, a very large one, will not be available for consultation at present.

Among other recent accessions the following may be noted: 2,444 prints (photofilm enlargements and negative photostats) of manuscripts in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, mainly pertaining to the Yucatan region of Mexico, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an addition to previous gifts from the Carnegie Institution of Washington; a manuscript volume concerning the establishment of military forces in Great Britain and the plantations, 1731 to 1737; 156 original manuscripts and copies of 237 papers pertaining to the British Admiralty, mainly from the papers of Admiral Sir George Pocock, including prison and court martial records and descriptions of prisons, dated 1746 to 1748; twelve letters and one receipt to and from Isaac Hull, commodore, United States Navy, dated October 3, 1811, to May 1, 1826; 159 papers of George Bancroft and Alexander Bliss, dated 1816 to 1882, including 143 letters from Daniel Webster to Alexander Bliss, 1816 to 1827; "No 1 Journal of T. R. Peale" (one volume), kept on the United States Exploring Expedition to the South Sea, August 1, 1838, to April 7, 1839, includes notes and drawings of Titian Ramsay Peale, naturalist; four volumes of journals of accounts of William Boswell and Company, of Port Tobacco, Maryland, dated October 24, 1846, to September 30, 1861; papers of Edward Tracy Clark, approximately 9,000 pieces, dated c. 1923 to 1932; papers pertaining to libraries of the counties of the states of the United States, resulting from a survey directed by Mrs. Laura Steffens Suggett; material prepared by the United States WPA Writers Project, dated c. 1936 to 1941, relating to contemporary history of Washington, D.C.

Special emphasis is being given to the processing of papers of the secretaries of state. In line with this, the papers of Thomas F. Bayard and of Robert Lansing have been completely arranged, and will be bound.

Miss Louise M. Fox and Miss Virginia E. Massey have transferred from the Manuscript Division to other divisions of the library, while Miss Marian O. Norby has accepted a position in the Department of Agriculture, and Donald A. Thompson has resigned to become a member of the Historical Section, Office of Chief of Chaplains, War Department.

The following announcement of interest to archivists appears in the introduction prepared for the *Checklist of Microfilmed State Legislative Journals* by George S. Schwegmann, chief of the Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress:

Students of American history have long felt the need for the assembly and publication in convenient form of the early issues of the proceedings of legislative bodies of the American colonies, territories and states. The ravages of time have exacted a heavy toll of this type of material and the few remaining copies of many of the journals are widely scattered among libraries and private collectors. In order at least partially to fill this need the Library of Congress, in collaboration with the University of North Carolina, undertook to microfilm the journals represented in the following list.

After a nation-wide search for the location of materials in libraries, archival depositories and private collections, the procedure followed has been to microfilm the printed edition of journals, whenever found. Proceedings in the original manuscript, if extant, have been used to fill gaps, and where necessary, resort has been made to contemporary reports published in newspapers. Where it has been impossible to present a perfect record of each session, an indication of the fact has been made in the abstracts appearing at the beginning of each reel of film. Records of legislative sessions available through other forms of publication have not been included in the film.

In addition to the journals of legislatures the film includes the unpublished journals of a few constitutional conventions, the proceedings of some of the irregular bodies during the period of the American Revolution, the executive minutes of the Governor and Council of several of the colonies, and some miscellaneous public documents.

The project was made possible by the generosity of the many librarians, archivists and private collectors who pooled their resources and freely cooperated in its execution. Credit is given at the proper places in the film for the various holdings copied. The general support and encouragement given by many interested persons in working out this experiment in microphotography is also gratefully acknowledged.

The master negatives have been deposited in the Library of Congress. Positive prints of the entire set or any portion of it, unless specifically restricted, are available from the Photoduplication Service of the Library at the rate of six cents per foot.

HISTORICAL BRANCH, ARMY AIR FORCES

In September, 1942, a Historical Branch was established in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, A-2 (Intelligence), Headquarters, United States Army Air Forces. Its duties are to direct, co-ordinate, and prepare for publication unit histories of the AAF; to assemble a critical catalogue of AAF historical sources, both published and manuscript; to appraise the current and noncurrent records of the AAF as to their ultimate usefulness for further historical research; and to make its historical studies and materials available to the staff offices and personnel of the AAF and eventually, subject to A-2 restrictions, to other government agencies, private scholars, and the general public. In short, the aims are to gather materials for a permanent record and to prepare a history of all activities, functions, and units of the AAF, administrative as well as operational. Included in the branch are units dealing with administrative history, operational history, biography, popular narrative, archives, and special projects.

Among the personnel of the Historical Branch are: Col. Clarence B. Lober, chief; Maj. Clanton W. Williams, formerly of the University of Alabama, technical executive; Col. Hans C. Adamson, Lt. Col. Falk Harmel, and Maj. Ernest L. Jones, all air corps historical writers; and various civilian historians and archivists, including Ben R. Baldwin, Chase C. Mooney, Robert L. Thompson, Martin P. Claussen, and Joseph Reither. Enlisted men with professional historical training are Sgt. J. Merton England and Officer Candidates Earl F. Cruickshank and Harold J. Bingham. Historical officers are in process of being assigned to each of the air forces in the continental United States as well as in the theaters of operations overseas. In addition, there are historical officers in each of the staff offices, directorates, and commands.

OFFICE OF RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, NAVY DEPARTMENT

The unprecedented expansion of naval activities, both ashore and afloat, has brought about an equally unprecedented scale of record making and collecting. The near impossibility of obtaining space and equipment for storage of the increased volume had become a problem of very serious proportions.

Among the bureaus and offices of the department and naval establishment confronted with this problem, the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, which because of the nature of its functions, was in danger of becoming engulfed in a sea of accumulating records and attendant difficulties.

Cognizant of this fact, the Office of Records Administration detailed a member of its staff to make a complete survey of the records maintained by that bureau and its offices. Upon completion of the survey, a schedule for the systematic retirement of all supply, accounting and financial records was drawn

up—affecting copies of form records accumulating at a rate in excess of 500,000,000 annually—and, together with related recommendations, submitted to the bureau for approval which was readily given.

At present, the schedule is being placed into effect and upon full operation will affect all supply, accounting and financial records maintained by the Navy Department and all ships afloat in addition to nine hundred supply offices and 3,192 other shore activities. The savings, translated into dollars and cents which will be realized by this procedure, while tremendous, defy calculation at this time.

Other large scale schedules are currently being developed which will be applied to various other naval activities, both ashore and afloat, and should have equally far-reaching and tangible results in expediting operations and effecting economies.

Mr. Robert D. Hubbard, formerly director of personnel and executive officer at the National Archives, has joined the staff as associate director; Lt. (j.g.) Charles H. Niemann, USNR, has been appointed to the staff as chief of the Correspondence Management Service. Lt. Niemann, until recently, was co-ordinator of correspondence at the U. S. Civil Service Commission; Dr. Robert H. Bahmer, who for the past year has been associated with the records administration office as chief of Archival Service, has returned to the National Archives as chief, Division of Navy Department Archives; Robert A. Shiff has been advanced to the position of assistant archivist.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

The Tennessee Valley Authority's program of records administration and archival service gained new impetus a little over a year ago with the designation of the director of the Office Service Department as the agency's archivist. The broad program is based on the development and establishment of physical and procedural standards for files operation and for the preservation and disposition of records.

Centralized control of files, decentralized by departments and over a wide area, is vested in the archivist. A program of files audits is under way to determine the nature of the records and the methods by which they are handled. The audits culminate in recommendations to improve the service and to establish the files on a standard system.

The preparation of retention and disposal schedules by item rather than by type or class of record is one of the major parts of the program. The schedules are essential in evaluating all records, the preservation of permanent records, and the legal destruction of material which has no further value. More than 2,500 file drawers of records without permanent value or historical interest have been destroyed within the past year. If the change in the records disposal law which is now being considered in Congress is approved, the schedules

will have an additional significance in the disposition program now in effect.

The authority's microfilming operations also are important in the over-all program. Filming inactive permanent records reduces the volume of space otherwise required, releases needed files equipment, and, in addition, affords better protection to the records.

Mr. Charles E. Lex, Jr., director, Office Service Department, is the archivist of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

THE SECOND INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION OF THE CARIBBEAN

Resolution XXXIV of the convention provided for the creation of a corporation of librarians, archivists, and museum curators of the Caribbean to be located permanently in Havana, Cuba, composed of a president who shall be the president of the Sociedad Colombistas Panamericana, a general secretary, and three delegates for each country—a librarian, an archivist, a museum curator, and a delegate at large who shall be named by the Pan American Union.

COLORADO

The following act relating to state archives was enacted by the legislature and approved by the governor on February 25, 1943:

Section 1. The State Historical Society of Colorado, heretofore declared to be an institution of the State of Colorado, is hereby made the official custodian and trustee for the State of Colorado of all the documents, papers, manuscripts, newspapers, books, letters, maps, plans, pictures, photographs, recordings and other public records and archives of whatever kind which are transferred to it from any public office of the State of Colorado or any County, City, Municipality, District or legal subdivision thereof. For the purpose of determining the order of payment of its appropriations, the State Historical Society of Colorado is hereby declared to be part of the Executive Department of the State Government.

Section 2. Every public officer who has in his custody public records deemed by him to be unnecessary for the transaction of the business of his office shall consult with the Curator of History of the State Historical Society of Colorado and the Attorney General of the State of Colorado, and such three officers shall determine whether the records in question are of legal, administrative or historical value.

Section 3. Those records unanimously determined to be of no legal, administrative or historical value shall be disposed of by such method as such three officers may specify. A list of all records so disposed of, together with a statement certifying compliance with this Act, signed by such three officers shall be filed and preserved in the office from which the records were drawn and in the files of the State Historical

Society of Colorado. Public records in the custody of the State Historical Society may be disposed of upon a similar determination by the Attorney General, the Curator of History and the head of the agency from which the records were received, or its legal successor.

Section 4. Those records deemed by the public officer having custody thereof to be unnecessary for the transaction of the business of his office, and yet deemed by either such public officer or the Attorney General or the Curator of History to be of legal, administrative or historical value, shall be transferred to the custody of the State Historical Society of Colorado. A list of all records so transferred, together with a statement certifying compliance with this Act, signed by such three officers, shall be preserved in the files of the office from which the records were drawn and in the files of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

Section 5. All public records of any public office shall, upon the termination of the existence and functions of that office, be checked by the Curator of History and the Attorney General and either disposed of or transferred to the custody of the State Historical Society of Colorado, in accordance with the procedure of this Act and the findings of such two officers. When a public office is terminated or reduced by the transfer of its powers and duties to another office or to other offices, its appropriate public records shall pass with the powers and duties so transferred.

Section 6. The State Historical Society of Colorado, and every other custodian of public records, shall carefully protect and preserve them from deterioration, mutilation, loss or destruction and shall, whenever advisable, cause them to be properly repaired and renovated. All paper, ink and other materials used in public offices for the purpose of permanent records shall be of durable quality.

Section 7. Public records, in the discretion of their custodian, may be copied by photographic, microfilm or similar process. Such copies shall be certified by their custodian as true copies of the originals at the time they are made and before the originals are destroyed or lost, and the copies so certified shall have the same force and effect as the originals if the originals are destroyed or lost. Even after such copies are made, the originals shall be destroyed or transferred only in accordance with Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 hereof. Copies of public records transferred from the office of their origin to the State Historical Society of Colorado, when certified by the Curator of History or the Assistant Curator of History under its seal, shall have the same legal force and effect as if certified by the original custodian of the records.

Section 8. The Curator of History of the State Historical Society of Colorado, in person or through a deputy, shall have the right of reasonable access to all non-confidential public records in the State, with a view to securing their safety and preservation and determining their historical value. The Curator of History is authorized to negotiate for the transfer of any public records from any office of the State or

any County, City, Municipality, District or other legal subdivision thereof. The Curator is authorized to delegate his authority under this Act to any employee of the State Historical Society he deems suitable.

Section 9. On behalf of the State of Colorado and the State Historical Society of Colorado, the Attorney General may replevin any public records which were formerly part of the records or files of any public office of the Territory or State of Colorado.

Section 10. All acts and parts of acts in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 11. The General Assembly hereby finds, determines and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety.

Section 12. In the opinion of the General Assembly an emergency exists and, therefore, this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Herbert O. Brayer, archivist of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company has been on leave of absence for the past four months while engaged in writing a new book on the development of the South-western area. During his absence the assistant archivist, Mrs. Garnet M. Brayer, has carried on the preparation of the *Calendar of the Archives of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, 1870-1917*, which will be published in the fall. Miss Elizabeth Stafford, formerly head of accessions, has resigned and Miss Lola Holmser, formerly assistant state librarian and historian of Wyoming, has been appointed to succeed her.

DELAWARE

The Public Archives Commission has secured the passage of Senate Bill No. 58, which amended and strengthened the act specifying the quality of papers and inks to be used in public recording offices, and Senate Bill No. 59, which provided for the photographing of public records and permitted the use of photographic reproductions as legal evidence. House Bill No. 137, also passed, provided the commission with a supplementary appropriation for the publication of the calendar of Kent County probate records, 1680-1800, now in preparation under the direction of Leon deValinger, state archivist.

Christopher L. Ward, president of the Historical Society of Delaware, died on February 20, 1943. Mr. Ward was a well known authority on the history of the Dutch and Swedes in Delaware. His successor at the society has not yet been chosen. Miss Grace E. Heilman, librarian of the society has resigned to enter military service. She has been succeeded by Miss Gertrude Brinckle.

INDIANA

The Indiana Division of the state library has recently acquired the papers of Joseph A. Wright, governor of Indiana, 1849-1857, representative in Congress, 1843-1845, U. S. Senator, 1862-1863, and minister to Prussia, 1857-1861 and 1865-1867. The collection, which includes a number of family letters, covers the period from 1849-1931. The greater part of it deals with Indiana politics, especially during the 1850's.

The Indiana National Guard Service Records, 1880-1921, were transferred to the Archives Division of the state library during the past year. The division already has the service records for the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and the World War. The present war has brought these files into frequent use in answering requests for service records of men who were engaged in earlier wars.

The State Historical Bureau has published three volumes of *John Tipton Papers* containing documentary material on the War of 1812, the Indiana-Illinois boundary, Fort Wayne and Logansport Indian agencies, Indian treaty negotiations, and the removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana.

IOWA

Iowa archives work received a severe set-back recently when a department operating a chemical laboratory moved into the work rooms of the building the Department of History and Archives had just obtained, under a lease, as a temporary storage place for the state's vast accumulation of archival material. Another department coveted the best of the rooms to make tests of seeds, feeds, and gasoline, and moved in. Ora Williams, curator of the Department of History and Archives, writes that this will mean a partial abandonment of projected plans for putting the archives of the state in good condition. In protest, Mr. Williams has had published and distributed a leaflet entitled *Wartime a Time for Prudence*.

MARYLAND

Judge Carroll T. Bond, a member and chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals and chairman of the Hall of Records Commission from its first meeting in 1935, died on January 18, 1943. Judge Bond will be remembered by members of the Society of American Archivists who attended the Annapolis convention in 1939 for his enthusiastic address of welcome made at the opening session. According to law, Judge Bond will be succeeded as a member of the Hall of Records Commission by his successor on the bench, Judge Lindley D. Sloan. A new chairman will be elected by the commission at its next meeting.

The Hall of Records has recently acquired the Frederick County Record of Accounts, 1748-1823, from the register of wills in Frederick County. Photostat copies have been furnished to the county for ready reference at the courthouse. The archivist of Maryland, Morris L. Radoff, announces that the *Seventh Annual Report* covering the work of the Hall of Records for the fiscal year October, 1941-September 30, 1942, is now available for distribution.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore has recently received a collection of proprietary papers from Hugh Hampton Young of that city. A catalogue of these papers has been published by the library, and is available for free distribution.

LOUISIANA

Among the recent acquisitions of the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, are several collections pertaining directly to the history of the lower Mississippi Valley. The J. N. Evans Collection of more than two thousand items contains valuable material of the period 1800-1830 and emphasizes the Burr conspiracy, the Napoleonic period in Europe, and the effect of the War of 1812 on the southern cotton planter. Later papers in the collection are of the Civil War and Reconstruction period. The department has also acquired the letters and papers of Benjamin F. Flanders, reconstruction governor of Louisiana and agent of the U. S. Treasury Department in that district. These papers furnish an interesting insight into reconstruction politics in Louisiana. A collection of the papers of James A. Gillespie and family is a valuable source for the plantation life of Louisiana and Mississippi. Since the closing of the WPA Historical Records Survey project in Louisiana, the department has become the depository for its library publications and records.

MICHIGAN

Henry D. Brown, assistant curator of the Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, is now on military leave. Miss Elizabeth A. Leslie has been appointed to serve in the position. Other appointments to the staff include Miss Elizabeth H. Chase and Miss Gertrude Peck. Recent manuscript accessions include the correspondence and files of the dean of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts, University of Michigan, 1916-1932; the Darius Pierce papers, 1846-1847 (Pierce was a prominent Michigan political figure); the John W. Longyear papers, 1870-1875 (Longyear was a judge of the U. S. District Court at Detroit); Eliza Mosher papers (Miss Mosher was first dean of women at Michigan and later a prominent New York physician); Peter White papers, obtained from Baker Library; Jesse

Reeves papers (Reeves was professor of political science at Michigan, 1910-1942, and American representative to the Hague Conference, 1930). The collections are described in a *Guide to Manuscripts* prepared by the Historical Records Survey and the staff of the collections in 1941. An informative article about the collections, prepared by the director, Lewis G. Vandervelde, appears in Part I of *The University of Michigan; an Encyclopedic Survey*, published in 1941.

MINNESOTA

Lewis Beeson has been named acting director of the Minnesota State Historical Society during the absence of Arthur J. Larson on military leave. Jacob Hodnefield has been named supervisor of the society's war history activities. Miss Phyllis Sweely and Miss Catherine Bauman have resigned as assistants in the Manuscript Division of the society.

The society has given much attention recently to the care and arrangement of certain archival materials in its custody. Among these are interesting records of the surveyor general of logs and lumber, which are being examined and arranged. The society is also considering the possibility of "destroying huge accretions of archival material after they have been copied by the microfilm process."

War-time activity has greatly increased the use of the society's facilities. More than six thousand readers worked in the Manuscript Division during the first nine months of 1942, more than double the number of readers present during the entire year of 1941. During the decade of the 1930's the average yearly number of readers fluctuated between three hundred and five hundred.

The certificate of citizenship issued to Knute Nelson in 1866 is included in a mass of papers of the Minnesota senator, consisting of five boxes and an account book and covering the years from 1861 to 1934, received by the society from the estate of his daughter, the late Mrs. Ida G. Nelson of Alexandria. Among other personal items in this valuable collection, which adds considerably to the bulk as well as the interest of the Nelson papers already in the possession of the society, is a record of Nelson's service in the Civil War with the Fourth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. Throughout his life, Nelson corresponded with members of his regiment, and a large number of the resulting letters are among the papers recently presented. Other correspondents represented include President Theodore Roosevelt, William B. Dean of St. Paul, and Charles Whitney, a Minnesota journalist. There are a number of letters from H. E. Paine relating to the constitutional basis for state-owned elevators. Newspaper clippings reporting events in Nelson's career from 1886 to 1920 are included. The senator's activities as a railroad

lawyer, an estate administrator, and a land speculator are reflected in the records of twelve legal cases dating from 1868 to 1915.

MISSISSIPPI

William D. McCain, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and a member of the council of the Society of American Archivists, has been granted military leave of absence for the duration of the war. Miss Charlotte Capers, a member of the staff of the department for the past five years, will serve as acting director in his absence. Moreau B. Chambers, a member of the staff of the department, is also on military leave.

NEW YORK

Under an agreement with Eugene H. Pool, the New York Historical Society will receive a valuable collection of manuscripts pertaining to Capt. James Lawrence, famous in the early history of the American navy. The Beekman Family Association has transferred to the society a large collection of books and business records, 1732-1877.

Clifford Lord, director of the New York State Historical Association, is author of an article describing the Farmers' Museum at Cooperstown, printed in the January issue of *New York History*. The first portion of the article indicates the kindred interests of archives and museums in preserving the record of the nation's past. The museum will collect manuscript and record materials as well as museum pieces.

OHIO

William D. Overman, executive secretary of the Ohio War History Commission, has been appointed as war-time historian and archivist by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Akron, Ohio. Frank P. Weisenburger will assume active direction of the commission's work.

Archivists interested in the terminology of their profession may wish to note a definition of the word "document" recently reprinted in the Ohio War History Commission's release, *Communikay*. This definition, taken from a publication of Yale University Library sponsoring the collection of war literature, reads as follows: "A document is any piece of paper with marks on it which make sense."

The Department of Documents of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society will issue, from time to time, calendar lists of recent acquisitions in the society's Department of Manuscripts, Maps and Archival Material. As the new material is examined and processed, it will be listed in this manner for the benefit of scholars, who are advised to save these calendars which, in cumulative form, should comprise a useful catalogue

of the more recent documentary holdings of the society. In addition to the formal listings, these releases will contain certain interesting facts found in the examination of this type of material, as well as news items about researchers and scholarly visitors. Harlow Lindley, librarian of the society, announces the appointment of Miss Bertha E. Josephson to be chief of the Department of Documents. She was formerly editorial associate and secretary to the librarian.